

# THE NEW GROUNDWORK OF BRITISH HISTORY

(THE NEW "WARNER AND MARTEN")

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BOOK ONE

55 B.C. - A.D. 1603

BLACKIE & SON LIMITED

LONDON AND GLASGOW

BLACKIE & SON LIMITED  
16/18 William IV Street,  
Charing Cross, London, W.C.2  
17 Stanhope Street, Glasgow

BLACKIE & SON (INDIA) LIMITED  
103/5 Fort Street Bombay

BLACKIE & SON (CANADA) LIMITED  
Toronto

THE NEW GROUNDWORK  
OF BRITISH HISTORY  
is issued in the following forms:

COMPLETE — 55 B.C.—A.D. 1939.

BOOK ONE — 55 B.C.—A.D. 1603.

BOOK TWO — 1603-1939.

SECTION TWO — 1485-1714.

SECTION THREE — 1603-1783.

SECTION FOUR — 1688-1939.

SECTION FIVE — 1783-1939.

*First published 1943*

*Reprinted 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947*

*Reprinted, with minor adjustments, 1948*

*Reprinted 1949, 1950, 1951 (twice), 1953*

*Printed in Great Britain by Blackie & Son, Ltd., Glasgow*  
Bk. I (F 938)



## PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

The first edition of Warner and Marten's *Groundwork of British History* was published in 1911, and the book has been a standard text-book in schools ever since. It has been revised several times, through its many editions and impressions, and now advantage has been taken of the years of the war to carry out a *complete overhaul* of the work, so as to bring it into line with the current requirements of *School Certificate Examinations* and with the most recent historical research.

The revision has been carried out by Mrs. D. Erskine Muir, with the approval of Mr. Warner's Trustees and of Sir Henry Marten, who has made many valuable suggestions and read the proofs. Mrs. Muir possesses high qualifications for her task and wide experience as a teacher and examiner in History.

The period from 1830 to 1939 is entirely new. The text up to 1830 has been rearranged so as to assist those working for School Certificate Examinations and certain chapters have been revised in the light of modern historical views. The text of Book One, however, is still substantially as written by Mr. Warner and of Book Two up to 1830 as Sir Henry Marten wrote it.

Notes, Time-Charts, and other teaching equipment have been provided by Mrs. Muir, who has also provided a selection of questions from actual School Certificate papers.

The book is arranged in twelve sections each corresponding to a recognized "period" in British History.

For permission to include questions from past School Certificate examination papers, grateful acknowledgment is made to the following Examination Boards: the University of Bristol [B], the University of Cambridge (Local Examinations Syndicate) [CL], the Central Welsh Board [CWB], the University of Durham [D], the University of London — General School Examination [LGS], and Matriculation Examination [LM], Northern Universities Joint Matriculation Board [NUJB], the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board [O & C], the Oxford Local Examinations Board [OL], and the University of Wales [UW]. The letters in square brackets are the abbreviations that have been used in the Examination Questions throughout the book.

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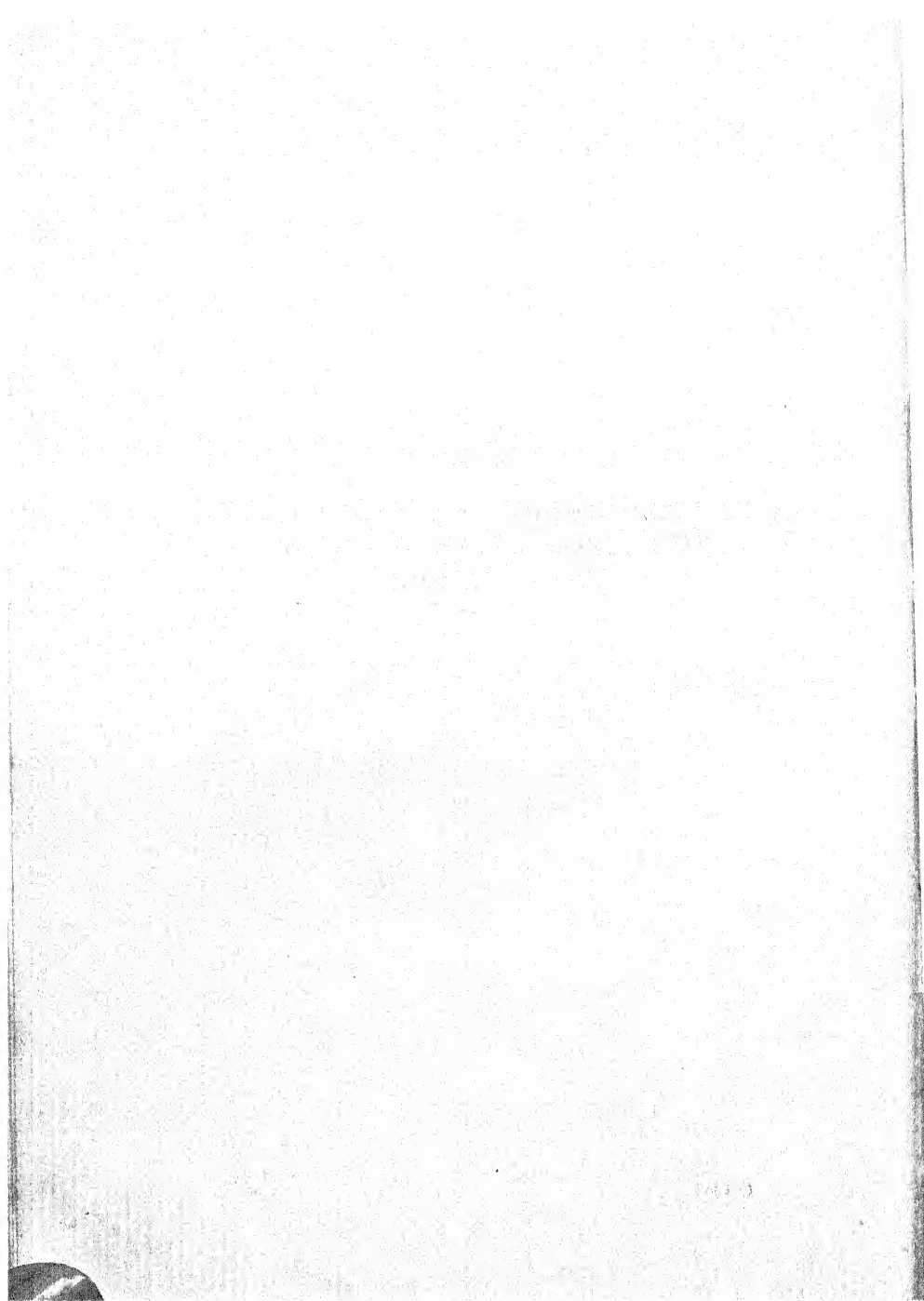
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BOOK ONE

FROM THE COMING OF THE ROMANS TO  
THE UNION OF THE CROWNS

55 B.C.-A.D. 1603





PERIOD ONE

THE INVADERS OF BRITAIN

55 B.C.—A.D. 1066

CHAPTER 1

BEFORE AND AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF THE  
ROMANS IN BRITAIN

55 B.C.—A.D. 410

Of those who lived in Great Britain in very far distant ages we know very little. There was, however, in 1912, discovered at Piltdown in Sussex an almost human skull, but the experts differ as to its date, some putting it at 50,000 years old and some at 500,000, and as to its character, all agreeing that it is not quite man, or *Homo Sapiens* as he is called, but disagreeing as to how near to him its original owner was. Nor can anyone say with any certainty when man—*Homo Sapiens*—began to exist in our islands, though, according to some estimates, it was not less than 30,000 years ago. Nor have we any written records of the character and language, or of the customs and usages of our first human inhabitants.

Nowadays, however, we rely less than before upon written records for knowledge of our own or other people's earliest days. We can learn much from archæology—the study of the actual remains of the past, houses, tools, weapons, shrines, burials, revealed by excavation. And so those who are skilled in such matters are able to distinguish various ages in the early history of mankind in this country. There

**Old Stone-age** was, for instance, what is known as the *Old Stone-Age* (Palæolithic Age), so named because man used to use rough stone — generally flint — implements and weapons. This age existed at a time when Britain was joined to the continent, and the North Sea was a swampy region into which both the Thames and the Rhine flowed, and when certainly for one, and perhaps for two periods this island — down to the Thames — was covered with an ice-cap. Hunting and fishing no doubt were the chief occupations of the men of that age. Their clothes were the skins of wild beasts, and their homes often caves.<sup>1</sup>

**New Stone-age** The *Old Stone-Age* was succeeded by the *New Stone-Age* (the Neolithic Age), and by this time Britain had become an island. The men of this age used more polished stone weapons and implements than their predecessors, and had a greater variety of them. A Neolithic household might have chisels and knives, axes perforated for the insertion of a handle, hammer stones, pestles, and whetstones — there were mines for the manufacturing of such articles at Grime's Graves at Brandon in Suffolk, and at Cissbury in Sussex. Neolithic man was not only a hunter and a fisherman, but he was also a herdsman — and oxen and sheep and pigs began to appear. Moreover, he became in the late Neolithic Age a tiller of the soil. The earth no doubt was tilled at first in very primitive fashion, with a bent stick or a deer's antler, and some of the ridges, or lynchets, as they are called, on some of our hills, may be due to the cultivation of this time.<sup>2</sup> With the Neolithic Age, too, came the beginnings of the making of pottery, of house-building, and of the making of textiles. The Neolithic period is best represented in Great Britain by the burial mounds, or Long Barrows as they are called, egg-shaped in plan, and consisting some-

<sup>1</sup> Kent's Cavern in South Devon, and the Pin Hole in Derbyshire, have the best claim to be the most ancient dwellings yet discovered in Britain.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the lynchets, however, probably belonged to the early Iron and the Roman period (roughly 500 B.C. to A.D. 500), and some of the others are remains of the old English open-field system.

times of a burial chamber and corridor, both built in stone — in England they are found most frequently in Wiltshire and Dorset, Somerset and Gloucestershire.

Late Neolithic man must have had very considerable technical ability if the building of that very remarkable stone circle at Stonehenge, and the grandest sacred site in Britain at Avebury are to be attributed to him.<sup>1</sup> It is possible, however, that they are due to some new invaders called the “Beaker”-people, so called from their beaker-shaped pots. It was during the supremacy of these people that Britain passed into the *Bronze Age* somewhere between 2000 and 1500 B.C. — though stone implements were still used, and, indeed, some of the finest specimens belong to the so-called Bronze Age. To the “Beaker”-people belong many of the “round” barrows dotted over so many parts of England. Bronze Age

For the means of communication in these early days, various *track-ways* were made, of which the most famous is the *Icknield Way* which connected south-west England and the east coast; it began from what was then the shore of the Wash in Norfolk and ran to the Chilterns, and then crossed the Thames to the Berkshire Downs, whence a track ran to Dorset.

“The early history of Britain is essentially,” it has been said, “the history of our invaders.” We must imagine successive waves of emigrants coming over to these Islands in the earliest times by land and in later times by sea — such as the people whom we call the “Beaker”-people. And then, sometime, not long perhaps after 600 B.C., though the dates are highly problematical, began to arrive several streams of invaders to whom are given the name of “Celts”. They were fierce fighters, artistic in their tastes, but backward in political development, organized not as one nation but in tribal states, living in villages, not in towns. Their Celtic Britain

<sup>1</sup> Other stone circles are in England, the Rollright Stones in Oxfordshire, at Arbor Low in Derbyshire, Stanton Drew in Somerset; in Scotland at Callernish in Lewis, at Inverness, and near Aberdeen; in Ireland at Lough Gur near Limerick.

"British" language, a Celtic tongue, the parent of modern Welsh, was spoken over most of Britain. Ireland (but not Scotland) had also a Celtic population who spoke another Celtic language, Gaelic, which was later carried by settlers to Scotland and is still to be heard in the Highlands and western isles. After the arrival of the "Celts", the use of iron was discovered, and there comes the beginning of what is called the Iron Age, roughly somewhere between 500 and 400 B.C. — and to that Age belong the Somerset lake villages of Glastonbury and Meare and many of the pre-historic camps. Britain as the centuries proceeded became more and more civilized, the south-east of the island being probably the most advanced.

Pytheas of  
Marseilles

It was not till after the arrival of the "Celts" that there was written the first account of Britain of which we know. The name of the writer was Pytheas, a Greek of Marseilles, and he lived at the same time as Alexander the Great and the philosopher Aristotle. He arrived at Land's End and seems to have travelled round to the east coast and may even have got right round Britain. Unfortunately his account has been lost and we only know of it from the brief extracts given by later writers.<sup>1</sup>

Julius  
Cæsar

The latest Celtic arrivals, the Belgæ, had not been long settled in Britain when our island came into contact with the Roman Empire. Rome had been founded, so the Romans believed, by Romulus in 753 B.C. By degrees she had established her supremacy in Italy, and shortly before the middle of the first century B.C. she had acquired an Empire which included not only Italy but a large part of the land bordering the Mediterranean, Adriatic, and Ægean Seas, including Spain and Greece and a large part of Asia Minor. And then in 58 B.C. Julius Cæsar, to be perhaps the most famous of Romans, began the conquest of Gaul. It was only natural that the Belgæ should send help and give shelter to their

<sup>1</sup> A later traveller shortly before the arrival of the Romans was Poseidonius of Rhodes.

kinsfolk in Gaul when Cæsar's conquest reached the Channel. This, and the rumours of British wealth, brought about Cæsar's expeditions to Britain.

Cæsar's first expedition (55 B.C.) was little more than a reconnaissance; the Britons showed fight, storms hampered his transport arrangements, and he stayed but a short time in the island. In the next year he came with a larger force, landed in Kent, and moved northwards. *Cassivellaunus*, head of one of the greatest tribes, the *Catuvellauni*, tried to organize a combined resistance, but the British were unused to common action, and the other chiefs were jealous of his power. One important tribe, the Trinobantes, thought it wise to join the invaders. Cæsar's legions stormed the British camp near the modern St. Albans, and Cassivellaunus offered to submit. Cæsar, who had many weightier matters than the conquest of this remote island on his mind, accepted the submission and withdrew his troops.

For nearly a hundred years Britain was left to itself. During that time important events happened. Julius Cæsar after his conquest of Gaul had made himself the master of Rome, only to be murdered a few years later (44 B.C.). After the Civil War, Augustus, the heir of Cæsar, became supreme. For a long time Rome had been a Republic, but though the forms of a republic survived, Augustus was, as a matter of fact, "Master of all things", and he was in reality, though not in name, the first Roman Emperor. Augustus did a great work not only in extending but in organizing the Empire. It was during his rule (29 B.C. to A.D. 14) that Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem, and during the reign of his successor Tiberius that He was crucified. During these hundred years southern Britain was still in close touch with Gaul — now a Roman province — and through trade and intercourse was becoming "Romanized". For example, British kings began to issue gold coins imitated from classical models. And then, in A.D. 43, another emperor, *Claudius*, decided to carry out the long-postponed annexation, and sent

an expedition under Aulus Plautius to begin the conquest.

The advance of the legions across the south and east of Britain was rapid, and many tribes made peace. But the most warlike of the British kings, *Caractacus* the son of Cymbeline, after being defeated by *Aulus Plautius*, retired to Wales and stirred up the hill-tribes to a stiff resistance. He was again defeated, by the second Roman governor *Ostorius Scapula*, and took refuge with the great tribe of the Brigantes in northern England, whose queen, more loyal to the conquerors than to the national cause, handed him over to the Romans (A.D. 51). He died, a captive but honourably treated, in Rome. In the meantime, the Britons carried on the struggle in North Wales until *Suetonius Paulinus* drove them back into Mona (Anglesey), and in a great battle completely overthrew them (A.D. 61). As the Druids had done their best to inflame the Britons against the invaders, they were all slaughtered, and their altars and sacred groves destroyed. The full fruits of this victory could not, however, be gathered, as during the absence of the legions a formidable revolt had broken out in the east. *Boadicea*, the deposed queen of the Icenii, had been flogged; this roused the indignation of her former subjects, who having had their lands taken from them, and being made to pay heavy taxes, were only too glad of the chance of rising against their oppressors. Rebellion spread fast; Colchester, London, and St. Albans were sacked and burned; all the Roman officials were massacred; the Ninth legion was cut to pieces. *Suetonius Paulinus* hurried back, only just in time. Once again the Roman discipline proved too strong for the Britons to contend against; the rebels were defeated, and *Boadicea*, seeing that all was lost, poisoned herself. She had, however, brought the Roman power in Britain to the very verge of ruin.

With the coming of *Julius Agricola* as governor in A.D. 78, we pass from the stage of conquest to the stage of settlement. Not that *Agricola* had not some stern fighting to do. He had again to penetrate to Anglesey, his light-armed men

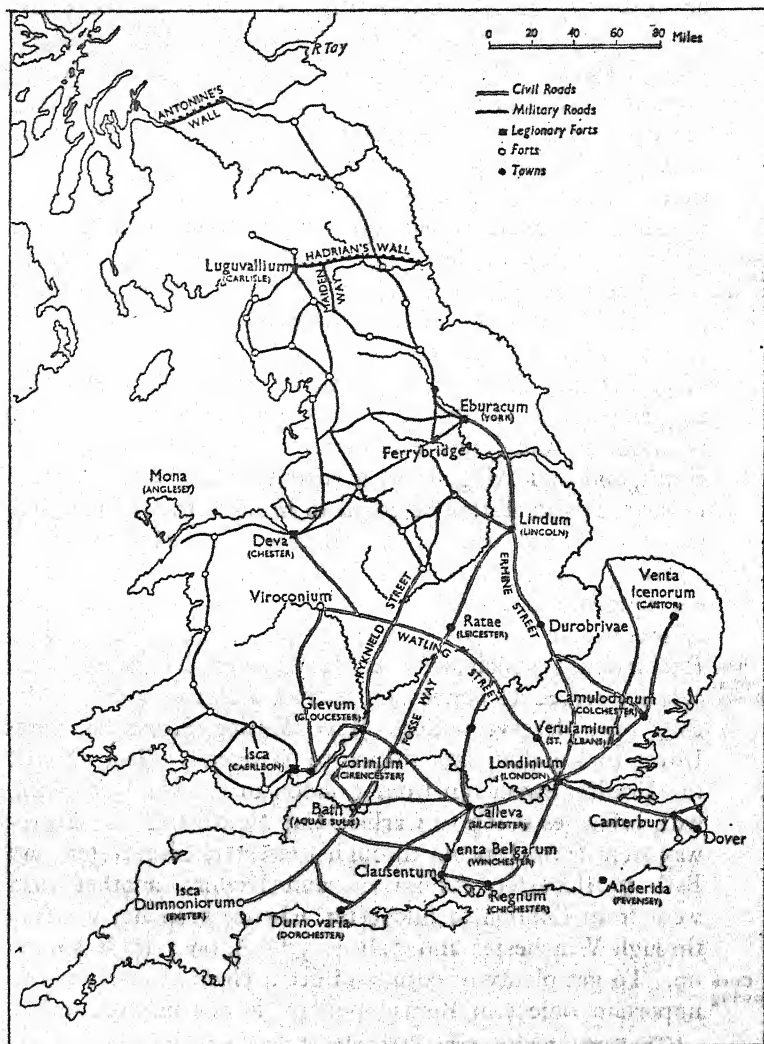
Carac-  
tacus

Boadicea's  
victories  
against  
the  
Romans

Her defeat

Epoch of  
Settle-  
ment.  
Julius  
Agricola  
(78-85)





# ROMAN BRITAIN

swimming the straits to reach the enemy. Having struck down Wales, he marched north and overthrew the Caledonians at the battle of the "Graupian Hill" (Mons Graupius), near the River Tay. But he was more than a mere soldier. The Roman historian Tacitus, his son-in-law, speaks of him as knowing that "Conquest can never be secure while it loads the vanquished with injury and oppression". He was ruthless to those who resisted, but he strove by kind treatment to win the love of those who yielded. He made the taxes less oppressive; he arranged that the forced service with the army should be as little burdensome as possible, and in a short time was rewarded with a willing stream of levies; he encouraged the Britons to set up courts of justice, and to build better houses; he did all he could to spread the use of the Latin tongue; he checked plundering raids by building a line of forts from the Clyde to the Forth, and by leaving strong garrisons on the Welsh border; in short, he did all that he could to bring to the Britons that peace which was usual in a well-ordered Roman province.

Romanization of  
Britain

The process of "Romanizing" Britain, which Agricola encouraged, was carried on by his successors. The condition of the people improved. Peace brought prosperity. The *Roman roads* which were stretched over the face of the country served to convey more than Roman legions. The chief ones deserve notice. The Watling Street ran from Dover to London, and thence to Wroxeter (Viroconium); the Ermine Street ran from London to Lincoln and York, with branches going to Carlisle and Newcastle; the Fosseway went from Lincoln through Leicester, Cirencester, and Bath to Ilchester, Axminster, and Exeter; another road went from London to Silchester, whence branches went on through Winchester and Salisbury.<sup>1</sup> A busy trade sprang up. To get plenty of corn, and get it cheap, was always an important object in Roman policy; it was needed for the

The  
Roman  
Roads

Corn  
growing

<sup>1</sup> The Roman roads — some 2000 miles of them — radiated from London. The main roads were about 20 to 24 feet broad, had gravel on the top, and for rivers or streams bridges or paved fords were provided.



troops in the island, for the Roman camps on the German frontier, and for the free gifts of corn made to the lazy populace at Rome. Britain was well suited to growing corn. Its fertility was a source of wonder to writers of the time; one speaks of it as "a land wealthy from its heavy crops, its rich pastures, and its veins of metals"; another assures us that on one occasion 800 vessels were sent thither to convey the corn. All agreed that it deserved the title of the "Granary of the North".

Along with this active corn trade came progress in the mining of tin, lead, and copper, in the making of weapons and iron implements, and in industrial arts such as weaving, dyeing, and pottery. Numbers of Romans and foreigners settled in Britain. Towns sprang up with well-built houses. London was the largest of these, and next in order of size came Cirencester and Verulam (St. Albans); others were Bath, Colchester, and Lincoln. Chester, Caerleon, and York were great garrison towns. Many of the important Roman towns are still the great cities of to-day; some are now but small places, and a very few have entirely perished (Wroxeter, Silchester, Caistor-by-Norwich). Excavation shows that the cities were highly civilized communities, with markets and shops, inns, temples, public baths, and sometimes theatres. An excellent example of an excavated town is Corbridge, near Hadrian's Wall. Roman *villas* (country-houses and farms) were scattered all over the south-east of the country; conveniently planned, with a better heating system than most modern English houses, often having fine mosaic paving and cheerfully painted walls, they show how large was the number of wealthy men, and how orderly and peaceful life had become.

The history of the island flowed on in a fairly peaceful course. Now and again there came a raid from the north or west; now and again an emperor appeared to visit his distant province. *Hadrian* came in A.D. 121 and built the wall from Solway to Tyne that bears his name. Nearly a

Industries  
and towns

*villas*

Hadrian  
(A.D. 121)

hundred years later (A.D. 208) *Severus* strove to complete the conquest of Caledonia, but died at York. Again a hundred years pass, and we find the most interesting connection between Britain and the Roman Empire in the fact that it was from Britain that Constantine, himself the son of a British mother, started on that memorable expedition which was to end in his becoming the first Christian emperor. Again another hundred years, and Rome, struggling with invaders nearer home, had to withdraw her legions from her distant colony. In 410 the Emperor Honorius told the Britons that they must in future provide for their own defence. (*Note 1.*)

Henceforth the Britons were to stand or fall alone. Yet the power to stand alone was no longer in them. They had been civilized into an orderly community, and they had copied Roman habits, worn Roman dress, spoken the tongue of their conquerors, dwelt in Roman villas, bathed in Roman baths, tasted Roman luxury. But they had not absorbed the qualities that had made Rome great. They had leaned on the might of Rome, till they had lost some of the rough vigour and love of independence that had marked Boadicea and Caractacus; and when deserted by the power that had first tamed and then protected them, they were to fall a prey to the fierce invaders who were pressing westwards. (*Note 2.*)

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SAXON INVADERS

The story of the Roman occupation is interesting historically, but it is not perhaps of great importance. It is a thing by itself. In France and Spain, for example, the effects of the Roman occupation lasted on and have made deep marks on their history. The very language of these countries is descended from the tongue of their conquerors.

But in Britain what the Romans did perished after they left. Our language and our institutions are Saxon. It is, therefore, with the coming of the Saxons that the continuous history of our country begins. Since that time there have been many changes but no violent break.

The Britons did not remain long unmolested. Raids of Picts from the north and Scots from Ireland grew more frequent, and a new terror was added by the appearance (446) of *Saxon* sea rovers from the shores of Germany and Frisia. An appeal for help was made to Aëtius, the Roman commander in Gaul: it bears the pathetic title of "The Groans of the Britons"; they prayed Aëtius to deliver them, "for", said they, "the barbarians drive us to the sea and the sea drives us back to the barbarians". No help, of course, came from Aëtius, who had his hands full with the Huns, and the British ruler, *Vortigern*, in despair hired a band of people whom Bede called *Jutes*; but whose place of origin is disputed, to war against the Picts.

This was a copy of Roman policy, but it was an unsuccessful copy. Rome, until later days, could keep her mercenaries in order; Vortigern could not. The Jutes turned against him, and under their leaders seized the Island of Thanet (449). Tradition gave these leaders the names of "Hengist" and "Horsa". (They mean "Horse" and "Mare"). The conquest had begun. More than a hundred and fifty years were to pass before it was complete. (Note 3.)

Starting from Thanet the Jutish conquest spread along the coast of Kent. Fresh hordes came over to aid their comrades; Vortigern and the Britons were driven back; the fortified towns along the shore were starved into surrender. Twenty years saw *Kent* completely conquered.

A few years later a band of *Saxons* overran *Sussex*, giving the land their name; while another force, starting from Southampton, fought their way inland and occupied what is now Hampshire, but was called after them *Wessex*. A fourth band appeared off the mouth of the Thames and

Saxon  
Pirates

Landing in  
Thanet  
(449)

Kent

Sussex,  
Wessex,  
Essex,  
East  
Anglia

seized *Essex*. Another tribe — the Angles — descended on what has been called from them *East Anglia*,<sup>1</sup> and spread north over the coast of Lincolnshire to the Humber mouth.

Gradual  
nature of  
conquest

The process of conquest was slow; it was not done by large forces working in combination. The country was reft from the Britons piecemeal. Each set of invaders came, coveted land, and had to press farther into the country, or along the coast, to get it. The fortune of war wavered. At Mount Badon, in 520, the West Saxons met with a crushing defeat which checked their advance for years, but on the whole the Britons lost ground steadily. The fighting was fierce; neither side spared the other; step by step, as the Saxons advanced, the Britons who were left alive withdrew. Few stayed to be slaves to the victors. Indeed between Britons and Saxons there could be no peace; year after year saw the Britons squeezed, first into the centre of the country, and then by degrees steadily westwards: the Britons were falling back towards the mountainous country where they had fought their last fight against the Romans.

Two battles are usually taken as marking the end of the Saxon conquest. These are the battle of Deorham in 577 and the battle of Chester in 613.

Battle of  
Deorham  
(577)

The victory of *Deorham* was won by the West Saxons under their King Ceawlin. The site of the battle is not far from Bath, and as a fruit of it, that city with Gloucester and Cirencester fell into Saxon hands. Yet the importance of the battle lies not in the extent of the conquest nor in the richness of the plunder, but in its locality. It gave the Saxons command of the Severn mouth, and so cut the Welsh of Wales off from the Welsh of the South-west of Britain. Precisely the same work was done in the north by the battle of *Chester*: this was won by an Anglian king, Ethelfrith of Northumbria, who, after hurling back an

Battle of  
Chester  
(613)

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps scarcely necessary to point out that as *Sussex* is the land of the South Saxons, so *Essex*, *Wessex*, and *Middlesex* are the lands of the East, West, and Middle Saxons, while *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* are the north and south folk of the Angles.

invasion of Picts at Dawstone near Jedburgh, fought his way westwards. The Welsh mustered all their forces against him. Twelve hundred monks came from the monastery of Bangoriscoed to pray for victory while the "Comrades" fought. *Ethelfrith* was victorious, and remorselessly slew the monks, just as Suetonius Paulinus had massacred the Druids. "Whether they bear arms or no," said he, "they fight against us when they pray to their God." As by Deorham the Saxons won the Severn line, so Chester gave them the Dee. The Welsh were again divided. The men of Wales were split off from their kinsmen in Lancashire and Cumberland.

Of course, it is not true to say that, with these battles, fighting between Briton and Saxon comes to an end. Nor were the "Welsh", as the Saxons termed the Britons,<sup>1</sup> subdued. Nearly another seven centuries had to pass before this was accomplished, but after these two battles there was no longer any question of which power was dominant in England. There was no hope of the Britons recovering their lost ground.

Little surprise need be felt that the Britons preferred to flee for refuge to the hills of the west rather than, by submitting, to live on in their old homes. In their eyes the Saxon was a barbarian, speaking an outlandish tongue and worshipping heathen gods. Yet, barbarians though they were, the Saxons are of great interest to us, for their language has become ours, and amongst them were perhaps germs of some political institutions and ideas that are our own peculiar pride to-day.

Tacitus, who tells us of their ways when they were still living in their homes in Germany, more than three hundred years before the first of them set foot in England, makes much of their freedom. Doubtless he did so because he wished to sharpen a contrast between what he regarded as

Subjection to the Saxons

Tacitus' account of the Saxons

<sup>1</sup> "Welsh" was the word the Saxons used to denote foreigners. The Britons called themselves "Cymry" (comrades).

"degenerate Rome" and the "noble savage". But he did not invent the account he gives. Hence he is a good enough authority for things existing among them, though it is true that by the time the Saxons were established in England, many of these institutions had decayed.

The Saxons kept some slaves, but did not depend on them to do the bulk of their work, as the Athenians and later Romans did. They drove out the Britons from their lands, and, in the main, tilled them for themselves, though doubtless as the invasion went farther west more Britons survived, and the race-blood was more mixed.<sup>1</sup>

They also had the practice of governing themselves by an assembly. In these assemblies — *folk-moots*, meetings of the people — grave matters were discussed, leaders were elected, questions of peace and war were decided. Yet we are told "no man dictated; he might persuade but he could not command". If the tribesmen agreed, they shook their spears, or clashed them on their shields; if not, they were not slow to express disapproval by loud shouts.

Folk-moots decayed as kingdoms grew. By degrees, as Justice England became united, and the petty Saxon Kingdoms, such as Essex, Sussex, and Kent, were changed into Shires, the folk-moots became *shire-moots*, courts held twice a year in which suits were heard and justice was done before the Ealdorman (the Shire officer), the Sheriff (*Shire-reeve*, the King's officer), the Bishop (the Church officer), and the

<sup>1</sup> The Saxons settled down in family groups or were the dependents of some chief; this is shown by their place-names. The syllable *-ing* in a place-name denotes kindred or common dependence on someone. Thus Wokingham, Nottingham, Billingshurst, Wellington, all indicate that the original settlers in these each traced descent back to a common ancestor. Further, the common terminations *ham* and *ton* stand for village or homestead or enclosure round a house. Nottingham, for example, meant "the ham or village of Snot's people". A third Saxon ending, which takes the form of *bury*, *burgh*, *borough*, is derived from the *burh*, or more elaborate entrenchment with a mound and a ditch. Hosts of examples occur, such as Bury St. Edmunds, and Edinburgh (Edwin's borough). These should be contrasted with Roman place-names, usually distinguishable by the termination *-caster*, *-chester*, or *-cester* (Latin, *castra*, a camp), such as Tadcaster, Winchester, Gloucester; or *coln* (Latin, *colonia*, a colony), such as Lincoln. British place-names are rare in England, except in Cornwall and in the names of rivers and streams, hills and forests. As we approach Danish times we shall also have to note their place-names, of which the commonest ending is "by", e.g. Derby, Whitby, Selby.



representative men of the Shire. And below the shire was the smaller division of the *Hundred*, with its hundred moot, Hundred and below the hundred was the Township. Here again we must notice another mark of our national character, the love of managing our own law courts. It is true that the Saxons did not use a "jury" to declare a verdict, but the plan whereby justice was done in each division before the representative men of the division is something of the same nature.

The Saxons also had a system under which "sureties" were pledged to appear and answer for others. This system was codified under Edgar, who laid down that every man must have a surety to answer for him in cases brought before the law. The Saxon institution, the *frithborh*, developed under the Normans into the *frankpledge*. Under this, all men were members of little groups, and if one member did wrong, the others were responsible for him. If the evil-doer fled, the members of his group had to appear, and answer for him, and pay the fines imposed as punishment for his wrong deed. Frank-pledge

Folk-moots were indeed a sort of primitive governing assembly, though they were doubtless disorderly gatherings where every freeman thought he had a right to air his own noisy opinion. But these general meetings are only possible for small tribes; kings will employ a council of picked men, more manageable and orderly. So grew up the Assembly of the Wise Men or the *Witan*. In it sat the "ealdormen", The Witan the rulers of the shires, and the "thegns", or chiefs of the king's bodyguard, who were the nobles and great men of the time; and when the Church was established in England, the archbishops and bishops took their places there also. This body more resembled the House of Lords than Parliament as a whole, for there were no commons to represent the people. Still, it had some of the powers which Parliament wields now. It made laws; it was consulted about affairs of state, on questions of peace and war, of treaties,

of religion; it could elect a king, observing certain rules of "kinship"; it could depose a king. Under a strong king it was mainly consultative. But when a king was feeble, or when the succession was in doubt, it could interfere.

Tacitus tells us that the Germans had no kings; but even if some bands of Saxons were without kings when they settled in England, it is certain that kings very soon became general. The title King (Cyning), which is probably connected with "kin", shows us that the man stood as the head of his race or kindred. His chief duty was at first to lead the people in war, and accordingly no child could make an efficient king. Hence the office was not strictly hereditary. When a king died, if his eldest son was of sufficient age and a suitable man he would be made king to succeed his father; but if not, some capable man who was "kin" to the late ruler would be chosen. A brother was often made king instead of a son. For example, Alfred himself was not the direct heir. His elder brother Ethelred left sons, but Alfred was put on the throne in preference.

Kings, once made, rapidly acquired great power. One cause lay in the union of the smaller kingdoms, till at last all England came under the sway of one house, the Kings of Wessex. Another source of strength, however, came from the *Gesiths*. When there was need, the whole mass of the people turned out to fight; a general levy of this kind was called the *Fyrd*. But besides the "fyrd" there was a special set of men, the "gesiths", who bound themselves by an oath to fight for the chief. They were his war band, his bodyguard; he was their lord, their bread-giver; they dwelt in his hall, shared his booty, and lived on food of his giving. To the "fyrd" war was an occasional necessity, to the "gesith" it was the business of life. As the chiefs became kings, the "gesiths" also grew more powerful. They were called by a new name — *thegns*; they formed a sort of nobility, not of birth, but of service; and speedily became more important than the *athelings* (descendants of



the royal blood) and *eorls* (men of noble birth). They held places in the Witan; they were the king's councillors; they held grants of king's land; and just as the king, by growing in power, had raised their position, so they in their turn helped to exalt the position of the king.

Summing up these matters in more technical terms: the Saxons were a people with kings, but the power of these was limited partly by custom, partly by an Assembly which took a great share in the government; succession to the throne was not strictly hereditary; justice was "popular", and the sphere of local government was large. (*Note 4.*)

It is convenient to give this account of the chief Saxon institutions here at the outset, since an understanding of them will be valuable in what comes later. But it should not be thought that all of them as described here were in use among the Saxons on their arrival. The kings amassed their powers gradually; shires could not exist till the smaller kingdoms were joined into larger ones; the Witan developed as the king needed its counsels, when his kingdom became large and the distance too great for all the warriors to assemble. Political institutions are generally of slow growth and slow decay, and we must picture some growing and others decaying during the course of events which we have next to follow.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY

Although little is known of the way in which the Britons had been converted to Christianity under the Roman rule, yet there is no doubt that many of them had become Christians. We hear of Alban, the first man to die for the Christian faith in England, who gave his name to St. Albans, and of three British bishops who visited a Council at Arles in 314. Indeed, when the Roman Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity, it was natural that it should be adopted in

Chris-  
tianity  
under the  
Romans

**British Christianity** Britain. One of the most terrible things about the Saxons in British eyes was that they were heathens. Britain, as a Christian Roman province, had felt itself a part of Europe; when it was overwhelmed by hordes of savage pagans it sank back into outer darkness. Its history, its religion, its life seemed all alike to have been swallowed up in the wave of invasion. Nothing shows more clearly the horror and loathing which the Britons felt for the Saxons than the fact that for so many years they made no attempt to convert them. It was not that there were no British missionaries:

**British saints and missionaries**

*St. David* preached in South Wales; *St. Patrick* converted Ireland; *St. Ninian* spread the Gospel in Galloway; *St. Kentigern* (Mungo) laboured in Strathclyde, with Cathures (now Glasgow) as his centre, and spent many years in Wales where he founded a monastery at St. Asaph; *St. Columba*, a Scot from Ireland, founded the great monastery in Iona, whence for centuries flowed a stream of missionary enterprise which in the reign of Oswald reached Northumbria and Christianized the North of England (see p. 23). *St. Cuthbert*, too, was of the Church of Columba. For, across the sea in Ireland the Church had flourished, and Irish art and Irish culture were full of vitality, through the influence of the Irish monks.

**The Roman mission**

What they left undone, Rome did. Everyone knows the story of Bede which tells how the first impulse was supplied; how the little fair-haired boys from Deira (Northumbria) attracted the notice of the abbot Gregory in the slave market at Rome; how he declared that they were "not Angles, but Angels", fit to be rescued from "the wrath"<sup>1</sup> to come; and vowed, when he heard the name of their king, Ælla, that "Alleluia shall be sung in the realm of Ælla". Years passed by, and Gregory, now made Pope, was able to keep his promise. It happened that King Ethelbert of Kent had married Bertha, a Christian princess from France. Gregory seized the chance thus offered to him. He sent *Augustine*,

<sup>1</sup> In Latin, *De Ira*.

with forty followers, to preach the Gospel in England. They landed in the year 597 at Ebbsfleet, the very landing place to which, many years before, the first band of Jutes had come. A fresh Roman conquest was to begin; this time, however, it was not by Roman legions for a Roman Emperor, but by Roman missionaries for the Roman Church.

Augustine  
lands in  
Kent (597)

Augustine and his followers were monks; they belonged to the order founded in the fifth century by St. Benedict of Nursia. Benedict, while wishing that his monks would set an example of holy lives, did not mean them to be idle. *Laborare est orare*, "to work is to pray", was his maxim for his followers' guidance. Consequently, though Augustine was come to teach the Saxon warriors that there was more serious business in life than fighting and feasting and drinking, they did not incur the contempt which they would have done had the Saxons found them what they would have considered idlers, persons who gave up their whole lives to meditation and prayer. And so, though Ethelbert received them with caution—"Your words", he said, "are fair, but they are new, and I cannot yet forsake what I have so long followed"—yet he gave them leave to preach and gain as many as they could to their religion. The earnest and simple teaching of the monks soon won converts, and amongst them Ethelbert himself. The king bestowed on Augustine a ruined church at *Canterbury*. Augustine named it "Christ Church"; it thus became, as it has remained, the first church in England—first both in time and in importance. On that site stands now the Cathedral of Canterbury; its Archbishop is the head of the Church of England.

Conversion of  
Kent

Just as a marriage brought Kent to Christianity, so another marriage carried the faith northward. Ethelbert's daughter, Ethelburga, married *Edwin*, the powerful King of Northumbria (617-633). As the princess was a Christian, it was agreed that she should be free to keep her faith. And with her went a new missionary, *Paulinus*.

We are told of Edwin that he "commanded all the nations of the English as well as of the Britons save only Kent". He was worth winning as a convert, and Paulinus set to work to win him; his wife besought him; even the far-distant Pope wrote him letters and sent presents. Edwin was moved by their pleading and by what he thought to be the special favours of Heaven which came to him at this time: he escaped from a treacherous attempt to murder him, he won a great victory over the West Saxons, his wife bore him a daughter. He consulted his Witan as to whether they should accept the new faith. One of his councillors spoke to the king a parable, in which he likened the life of man to the swift flight of a sparrow, "flying in at one door and straightway out at another; whilst he is within he is safe from the wintry storm; but after a short space, he immediately vanishes out of your sight into the dark winter from which he had come. So this life of man appears for a short space; but of what went before, or of what is to follow, we are ignorant. If therefore this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed." Paulinus was called in to address the Council, and at once persuaded them to become Christians. Coifi, the heathen high priest, was the first to destroy the old idols. Edwin's subjects followed their king's example, and were baptized in thousands.

Edwin no doubt was sincere enough, but the zeal shown by priests like Coifi and sudden wholesale conversions such as those of the Northumbrians did not amount to much. Those who abandon one faith for another so readily are not likely to be very firm in holding to any faith. If a time of persecution comes they will fall away again. This is exactly what happened in Northumbria. Edwin went to war with Penda, King of Mercia, and was slain at *Heathfield* (633). Paulinus and Ethelburga fled. Penda was a heathen, and his heathen warriors overran Northumbria. Many of the hasty Northumbrian Christians hastily gave up their Christianity.

This is made clear by the fact that *Oswald*, who came to the throne some years later, had to get teachers to preach Christianity afresh. This time, however, he got help from a Celtic source. While Penda had been ravaging Northumbria, Oswald had taken refuge among the monks of Iona for whom he conceived a great admiration. Accordingly he now applied to *Iona*. The first monk who was sent returned saying that the heathen were too stubborn to be converted. "Was it their stubbornness or your harshness?" inquired one of his brother monks named Aidan. "Did you forget to give them the milk first and then the meat?" Aidan was at once chosen to take the other's place. He speedily showed that he would not make the same mistake. By his efforts Northumbria was again converted, Aidan taking the Island of Lindisfarne as the seat of his bishopric. It is true that so long as Penda reigned, the new faith was always in danger. He struck down Oswald in battle at Maserfield (642), as he had slain Edwin. Not until Penda himself fell, in 655, by the River *Winwaed* (see p. 31), was Christianity in Northumbria secure. The old Mercian king had indeed been no savage persecutor of the Christians. "He only hated and scorned," says Bede, "those whom he saw not doing the works of the faith they had received." Yet so long as he was alive, the cause of the old gods was not lost. When he died it perished with him. After that even the Mercians were converted, and soon the whole island was Christian. Sussex was the last to receive the faith.

Oswald of Northumbria and Aidan

Battle of Winwaed-field and death of Penda (655)

A new trouble speedily arose. Some of the Saxons had been converted by Roman missionaries, others by Celtic. Wessex was converted by Birinus from North Italy, East Anglia by a Burgundian, St. Felix, Northumbria and Mercia by Irishmen, Essex and Sussex by Cedd and Wilfrid. All these teachers were striving for the same good end, but unfortunately they themselves were not agreed. The island, though one in faith, seemed likely to be divided in practice.

Struggle between Roman and Celtic missionaries

The difficulty indeed was not a new one. Even Augustine himself had met the British bishops and tried to persuade them to adopt Roman practices, and they had refused. In his time it was not so serious a matter, since it was the Britons who held to their own practice and the Saxons to the Roman teaching. But when the Saxons became a house divided against themselves there was grave danger. Accordingly in 664 a Synod was held at *Whitby* to settle the points of difference.

Synod of  
Whitby  
(664)

The champion of the Celtic or British practice was *Colman*, who had come from Iona, and had succeeded *Aidan* in Northumbria. The chief upholder of the Roman view was *Wilfrid*, Abbot of Ripon. Wilfrid had been trained in Lindisfarne, Aidan's own monastery, and might have been expected to take Aidan's views. But he had been on a pilgrimage to Rome, and had come back full of zeal for the Roman Church and Roman ways. The two argued it out before King *Oswy* of Northumbria, who presided at the Synod. The points of difference were not great. The Britons did not keep Easter on the same day as the Romans, they adopted a different tonsure, and had one or two other customs peculiar to themselves. Colman maintained that they should keep to the practices they had learnt from their fathers. Wilfrid urged that the Britons stood alone in their habits, and that all the rest of Christendom followed Rome.

Oswy de-  
cides in  
favour of  
Rome

At length *Oswy* asked Colman if the Keys of Heaven had been given to Columba as they had been given to Peter. Colman replied, "No." "Then," said the king — one may presume with a smile on his face — "if Peter is the door-keeper I will never contradict him, lest when I come to the gates there should be none to open them." He decided for Wilfrid and the Roman practice, and the Columban teachers returned to Scotland where, in 710, *Nectan*, King of the Picts, decided to conform to Roman usage. Shortly afterwards the Scots of Dalriada, and probably the British of Strathclyde, followed his lead.



The great work done by the Columban Church in the conversion of a considerable part of England must not be forgotten, even though in the event the whole country came under the Roman Church. But had England followed the Celtic practice, she would have cut herself off from Rome and the rest of Western Europe, and would have lost touch with the art and learning which emanated from Rome. Wilfrid put the matter in a nutshell: "To fight against Rome", said he, "is to fight against the world." By deciding to accept the Roman view, England came once more into cultural union with Western Europe.

The fruits of Oswy's decision were soon gathered. The archbishopric of Canterbury being vacant, an Englishman was sent to Rome to be consecrated. He died in Rome, however, and the Pope chose as Archbishop a Greek monk, *Theodore of Tarsus*. Theodore justified the Pope's choice as thoroughly in 668 as we shall see another archbishop justify it in 1206. He set himself to unite the Church into one, and to organize it under bishops, each of whom was to be responsible for his own diocese. In the Celtic Church the monastery had been the centre on which all turned. The abbot was all-powerful, the bishop merely his subordinate, whose chief work lay in ordaining clergy. Hence bishops wandered up and down the land with no settled sphere of authority, and often quarrelling; monasteries, owning no master but their own abbot, divided the Church rather than united it. What the results of the Celtic system were may be seen in Ireland, where, in the dark days before the English conquest, the Church fell entirely into the hands of the chiefs, lost its power, and merely gave an example of disunion to a people who already thought more of their own tribe than of their nation. But Theodore by setting up the Roman system with its grades of rank — the priest in the parish, the bishop in the diocese ruling over the priests, the archbishop in his province ruling over the bishops, and the Pope as the head of all — united the land into

Theodore  
of Tarsus  
(668)

His  
reforms

one.<sup>1</sup> When all met together in a national synod they no longer thought of themselves as men of Northumbria, Kent, or Wessex, but as members of a United Church. (*Note 5.*)

If we look for the results of the conversion upon our country, the first is here. A united Church gave the example for a united people; union under one archbishop accustomed men to think of union under one king; if they were alike in religion, they might well be alike in law and government. And we shall see that this soon came to pass. Another result was that English missionaries crossed to the continent — St. Wilfrid preached to the Frisians, St. Boniface laboured in Germany, and St. Willibrod carried on Wilfrid's work.

The Church offered an example of union; it also offered an example of peace. Among the Saxons men had been chiefly thought of for their valour. Their system of justice was based on the ideas of private vengeance or of fines paid in compensation for wrongs done. When a murder, a theft, or some deed of violence had been committed, the accused person had to be produced by his kindred. If he did not appear he was declared outlawed, and the injured man or his relations could exact what vengeance they pleased, if they found him. If he pleaded that he was innocent, he was required to support his oath by men who would swear to his being an honest man, and one to be believed. These were called *compurgators*. If he could not get sufficient *compurgators*, he had to go through the *ordeal*, an appeal to the judgment of Heaven. He put his arm into boiling water; or had to walk over red-hot ploughshares or carry a red-hot bar three paces. If within three days the wounds were not clean he was judged guilty. In that event he was dealt with as if he had pleaded guilty; that is to say, he was fined according to his crime. Part went to the king, as a compensation for a breach of the king's peace; part went to the injured man, or, in the case of a murder, to his

<sup>1</sup> The work was not completed by Theodore. He, however, began it. He increased the number of dioceses from eight to fifteen.



kindred. The amount of this fine partly depended on the gravity of the injury done, but partly also on the rank of the man injured. To kill a thegn was more serious than to kill a ceorl, and therefore a higher *wergild* had to be paid.

The Church held that misdeeds were not merely wrongs to a person, they were also sins on the part of the doer. Theodore and his priests taught that such acts must not only be *compensated* by fines, but atoned for by repentance and penance. Till the penance was discharged, the guilty man was outside the pale of the Church and beyond its protection. Thus the penitentiary system not only checked misdeeds, but strengthened the idea that such wrongdoers were offenders against the whole community. When this point is reached, we get a much higher standard of justice, in which certain offences are treated as *crimes*, and dealt with by the state as offences against itself.

Views of  
the  
Church

To the Church, too, we owe the beginnings of our learning. The Abbey of Whitby gave shelter to a cowherd who had become a lay-brother. This man was *Caedmon*, the first English poet. His great religious poem seemed to those of his time to be sent direct from heaven. "Others after him strove to compose religious poems, but none could vie with him, for he learnt not the art of poetry from men, or of men, but from God." *Bede*, another monk — the "Venerable Bede" is the respectful title which has been bestowed on him, and which is written on his tomb in Durham Cathedral — is a type of the great teachers whom the Church gave us. "My constant pleasure," he says, "lay in learning, or teaching, or writing." At his school of Jarrow six hundred monks learned from him. He was our first historian; and, indeed, it is he who tells us almost all we know of this time. And yet more than this, he translated into English St. John's Gospel, devoting the last days of his life to the task. He was urged to rest from the work that was killing him, but he refused, saying: "I don't want my boys to read a lie, or to work to no purpose when

The  
Church  
and  
learning:  
*Caedmon*  
(664)

*Bede*,  
d. 735

I am gone." When the last chapter of the Gospel was finished the great scholar died.

Another, and a very different type, from among the men the Church gave us was *Dunstan*. He, too, was a monk; but while Bede was a scholar, Dunstan was not only a scholar but a statesman also. He was the adviser of two kings, and practically regent for a third; he went with the king on campaigns against the Danes; he kept the royal treasure. As in addition he was Archbishop of Canterbury, we can understand that he was much the most powerful man in the kingdom. He was the first man to be great both as a cleric and as a statesman. But there were many who followed in his steps. In fact, until the reign of Henry VIII, the greatest ministers of our kings were almost always clerics. There were many things that commended them. No cleric could be suspected of aiming at the throne; nor could he found a family, and therefore he was presumably less greedy for lands and honours than a baron, who could leave such things to his son. Again, clerics were far more able and enlightened than the ignorant warriors and nobles who formed the king's court, and they did a great work for England. As we shall see later, one of these Church-statesmen, Stephen Langton, had much to do with obtaining for us our Magna Carta.

The Church, then, gave us the beginnings of our national unity; it did much to give us peace at home, and a better sense of what was lawful and right; it gave us scholars, and it gave us statesmen. It also encouraged art, and to it we owe, besides many beautiful buildings, the famous tall churchyard crosses of wonderfully sculptured stone, and, perhaps loveliest of all, the early illuminated manuscripts. The *Lindisfarne Gospelbook*, written about 700 A.D. "for God and St. Cuthbert", is considered the finest example of these, and is a great work of art with its splendid lettering and its pictures, its glowing colours enhanced by the use of gold leaf, and its rich ornamentation of intricate patterns of

States-  
men:  
Dunstan,  
Arch-  
bishop of  
Canter-  
bury (960)

wonderful interlacing curves, plant-designs, and quaint beasts and birds.

## CHAPTER 4

THE EARLY KINGDOMS: KENT, NORTHUMBRIA,  
MERCIA, AND WESSEX

The period of Saxon history which ends with the coming to the throne of the West Saxon King *Egbert* (802), who united all Saxon England under his sway, is sometimes called the period of the *Heptarchy*, the Rule of the Seven Kingdoms. Seven kingdoms may, indeed, be counted — Northumbria, Wessex, Mercia, Kent, Sussex, Essex, and East Anglia — though even here the description is not satisfactory, for Northumbria itself was made up of two kingdoms, Bernicia and Deira. But the term *Heptarchy* implies seven kingdoms independent of each other, whereas, in fact, these kingdoms were very rarely quite independent. As we shall see, sometimes one, sometimes another, had a sort of overlordship over the rest. A king who had this overlordship was often called a *Bretwalda*. Yet, again, this title must not be pressed too far. The name *Bretwalda* seems first to have been taken by Edwin of Northumbria to commemorate his victories over the Welsh. Other kings took the name without as much reason as Edwin had, and later writers have applied it as a convenient name for the powerful monarchs whose overlordship was admitted by the other kingdoms. Yet when we read that Edwin of Northumbria was *Bretwalda*, we must not imagine that the other kingdoms were really subject to him, any more than when we speak of the *Heptarchy* we must think of them as being quite independent. Just as the kingdom of *Kent* under *Ethelbert* was the first to accept Christianity, so it was the first to exercise an overlordship over the rest. *Ethelbert's* authority reached as far north as the Humber. He did not conquer the other

The  
Seven  
"King-  
doms"

Overlord-  
ship of  
Britain

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1119  
1120  
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kingdoms, at least there is no record of his warring against them, but they regarded him as their chief and fought under his banner. He was admitted to be the most important king in England.

The overlordship of Kent was, however, shortlived. It rose with Ethelbert, and fell at his death in 616. From that time the Kings of Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex in succession were regarded as overlords. It is tempting to wonder why the kingdoms of East Anglia, Essex, and Sussex never rose to this position, seeing that the south-eastern part of the country was richer and more fertile than the rest, and had been in Roman days more populous. The answer is probably this. When the Welsh were driven into the west, only the Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex, who still had to hold their borders against them, remained good fighting men. The rest, being less disturbed by wars, settled down to the arts of peace. They may have grown richer, but they grew weaker. The battle was not in those days to the wealthy, but to the strong.

Again, as Christianity passed from Kent to Northumbria, so also did the overlordship of England. Ethelric had formed Northumbria by uniting Bernicia (Lothian and Northumberland) and Deira (Yorkshire and Durham) in 588. Ethelfrith had, as we have seen, won the battle of Chester in 613, and had driven thereby a wedge of Saxon power between the Britons of Wales and Strathclyde. Great as Ethelfrith was, he was defeated and killed by a usurper, a son of the man whom Ethelric had driven from the throne of Deira when he added it to his own Bernician realm. Yet this usurper became even more powerful than Ethelfrith. He was *Edwin* the Bretwalda.

Edwin, in the years before he was converted to Christianity, had already made himself very powerful. He was King of the whole northern area between the Forth and the Trent, and he drove the Picts across the Forth. Though to-day it is considered unlikely that "Edinburgh" derives

Northumbria (616-685)

Edwin of Northumbria the Bretwalda

its name from "Edwinsburgh", still it is probable that his power was in fact established as far as the Forth. He also drove the Britons of Strathclyde away to the west of the Yorkshire hills. Having thus made his northern and western borders safe, he made an ally of Kent by his marriage with Ethelburga. Mercia and East Anglia were friendly. Wessex was hostile, but was conquered and forced to accept him as overlord. He was thus the most powerful ruler England had seen. He even extended his authority by building a fleet, which commanded the Irish sea and gave him control of the islands of Man and Anglesey.

That this great king had become a Christian no doubt helped the cause of Christianity in England, but his Christianity did not help Edwin. All who remained heathen were set against him, and when Edwin accepted a religion that preached peace rather than a sword, his foes thought he was growing weak and unwarlike. An alliance was formed against him by Penda, the heathen King of Mercia, who, calling in to his aid Cadwallon, King of Gwynedd (the Snowdonian district of Wales), overcame Edwin's army at *Heathfield*<sup>1</sup> in 633 (see p. 22). Edwin fell in the battle.

Edwin be-  
comes a  
Christian

Now followed a long struggle between Northumbria and Mercia which ended in the triumph of Mercia. *Penda* conquered East Anglia, and joined it to his Midland Kingdom. He was then faced by a joint attack from Northumbria (where Oswald ruled) and Wessex, but he defeated Oswald at the great fight at *Maserfield* in 642 (p. 23). His Northumbrian foe was now weakened by a quarrel between its own people (the rival houses of Bernicia and Deira). It was not till Oswy united the two factions that he could withstand Penda, and in 655 Oswy won a complete victory at *Wimboedfield* (possibly near Leeds).

Triumph  
of Penda  
of Mercia

With Penda fell heathendom; but the cause of Mercia survived. Just as Northumbria had been weakened by

<sup>1</sup> Hatfield in Yorkshire.

being the one Christian country in the midst of heathen foes, so Mercia was strengthened by abandoning the old religion which had separated her from the rest. Three years after Penda's death, his son once more threw off the yoke of Northumbria, and Oswy could not subdue him.

Fall of  
Northumbria

Indeed the days of Northumbrian greatness were drawing to an end. Yet the last days were almost the brightest.

Egfrith, who came to the throne in 670, conquered the Strathclyde Britons, and added Cumbria as far north as Carlisle to his dominions. He grasped, however, at a still wider power, and led an army north of the Forth. During his absence an uneasy dread lay on Northumbria. St. Cuthbert, Abbot of Lindisfarne, was at the time at Carlisle. He shared the anxiety of the people. "Let us watch and pray," said he to some questioner. The fears were justified. While St. Cuthbert was praying at Carlisle, Egfrith and his army were cut to pieces by the Picts in the battle of

Nectans-  
mere (685)

*Nectansmere*. With this defeat the Northumbrian power fell for ever.

For more than a hundred years Mercia held the overlordship which Northumbria had lost. She had, it is true, many struggles with Wessex, but on the whole kept the advantage. At first Ini, King of Wessex, seemed likely to unite and extend Wessex into a kingdom too strong for Mercia to overcome, but in 726, when Ini was absent on a pilgrimage to Rome, Ethelbald, King of Mercia, seized the chance to invade Wessex, and by 733 had subdued it. The Mercian overlordship lasted for twenty years, till the West Saxons rose and defeated Ethelbald at Burford. Under

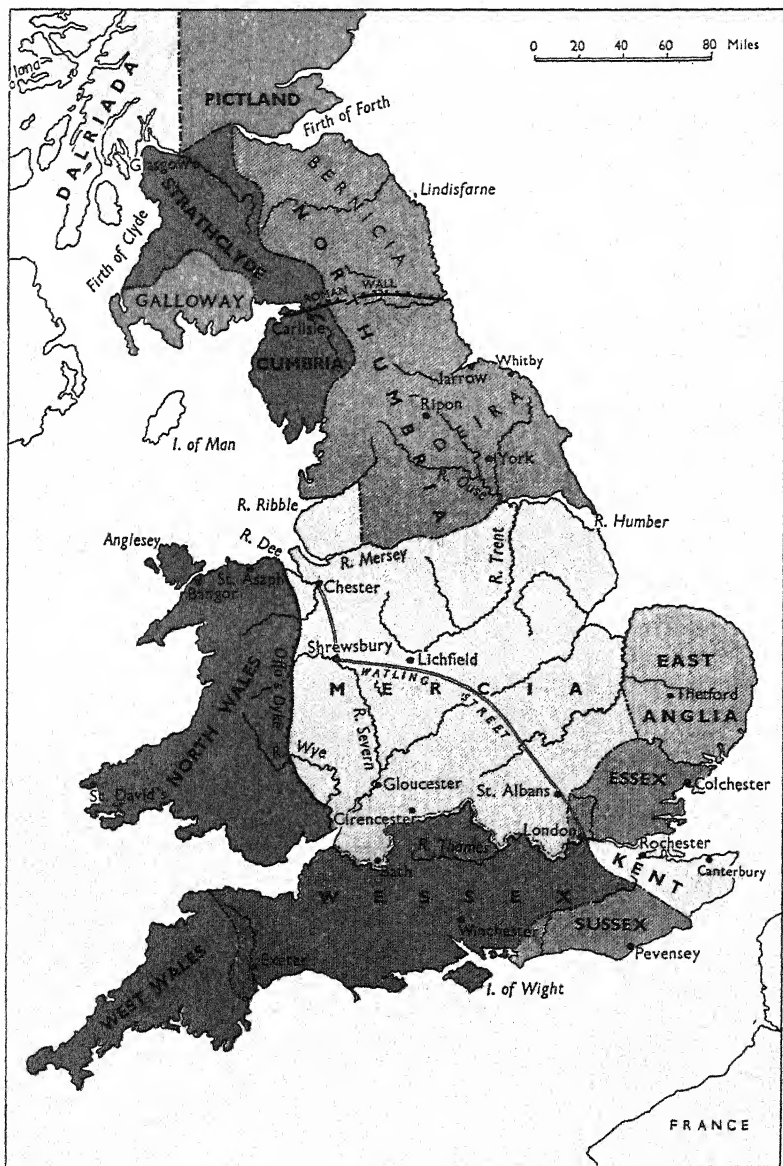
Mercian  
supremacy  
(685-796)

Offa  
(757-796)

Ethelbald's successor, *Offa*, Mercian power rose to its zenith. He overcame Kent and Essex, advanced the Mercian frontier to the Thames, pushed back the Welsh, and built the great rampart, "*Offa's dyke*", from the Dee to the Wye, to confine them within narrower limits. He persuaded Pope Hadrian to make Lichfield the see of an archbishop, so that Mercian Christians should not be under

Power of  
Mercia





### BRITAIN IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY

British territories, dark red; Anglian kingdoms, medium reds; Jutes (in Kent), lightest red; Saxon kingdoms, purples; Picts, dark blue; Scots, light blue.





the rule of Canterbury. He corresponded on terms of equality with the most powerful monarch of the time, the Emperor Charlemagne. Yet his power was no more secure than that of Edwin, or Oswy, or Egfrith. When he died, Mercian supremacy crumbled away.

The story of the rise and fall, first of Northumbria and then of Mercia, is apt to seem tiresome. After battles and conquests there is nothing permanent to show for it all. One fabric, laboriously raised, tumbles to the ground, and nothing is left but confused ruins. Then another is begun only to collapse like its predecessor. We shall now have to follow the building up of a third power, that of Wessex. This time, however, it is more interesting because it proved permanent.

We have seen from time to time a little of the early history of Wessex. The West Saxons were certainly the most powerful kingdom in the south. Twice they had seemed to be on the verge of great things, first when Ceawlin won the victory of Deorham (p. 14), and again when Ini conquered Somerset, Sussex, and Kent, thus becoming master of all England south of the Thames. But Ceawlin was checked by quarrels at home, and the West Saxon power had been overshadowed by the growth of Northumbria, while Ini was compelled to yield to Ethelbald of Mercia. Offa's death, however, gave a fresh opportunity; and with the hour came the man.

*Egbert* had already made one attempt on the West Saxon throne, but the influence of Offa had been too strong for him. He had taken refuge with Charlemagne, and had no doubt learnt at that monarch's splendid court the value of a united realm, and something of the art of ruling one. In 802 the West Saxons offered him the crown. The growth of his power was rapid. He subdued the British of Cornwall, defeated the Mercians at *Ellandun* in 825, tore from them the kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, and Essex, which they had held subject, and two years later, invading Mercia itself,

Rise of  
Wessex

*Egbert*  
(802-839)

made the Mercians accept him as overlord. His name was now so great that Northumbria submitted to a mere threat. Thus before his death in 839, although he did not actually displace the Kings of Mercia, Northumbria, and East Anglia, he had wider power than any previous king in Britain.<sup>1</sup> (*Note 6.*)

So far there is nothing to suggest to us that the overlordship of Wessex will differ from those of Mercia or Northumbria. We may expect to see it fall, as they fell. Indeed, on Egbert's death we may fancy that we see the fall beginning: Wessex went to one son, Ethelwulf; Kent, Essex, and Sussex were given to another son, Athelstan. Disunion appears close at hand. Yet there was a new factor in English politics. Efforts at union had hitherto failed, because so soon as one kingdom became great, it was the interest of the rest to pull it down. Such union as there was must be union of force, not of hearts. Ever since the Welsh had been tamed, England had lacked the strongest motive towards union, namely, the presence of a powerful foreign foe. In Egbert's reign this foreign foe was already at the gates. England had to face the invasions of the Danes.

## CHAPTER 5

### ALFRED AND THE DANES

Traditionally we are accustomed to think of *Alfred* and the Danes together. The name of the great hero-king at once raises in our minds the memory of a desperate struggle between the English and the invading sea rovers. Yet we must be on our guard lest we make too much of this. The Danes had begun to harass England long before Alfred's

<sup>1</sup> The spread of Christianity over Saxon England and the changes of the overlordship follow nearly the same course. If on a map of England a "horse-shoe" line be drawn, starting in Kent and travelling through *Essex*, *East Anglia*, *Northumbria*, *Mercia*, *Wessex*, back to *Sussex*, this traces the course of Christianity, save that *Wessex* was converted before *Mercia*; omitting the kingdoms in italics it also traces the "overlordship".

day; and though Alfred certainly checked their conquests for a time, he did not in any sense end the struggle. His sons and grandsons had to carry on his work, and even after their time the trouble broke out afresh. Indeed, for nearly two hundred years English history is full of the Danes, plundering, fighting, conquering and being conquered, rebelling against their Saxon rulers, and at last reaching their final triumph when a Danish king, Canute, rules England. Of these two hundred years it is plain that the reign of Alfred can occupy only a small part. None the less, it is a distinguished part.

Again, though Alfred was great as a leader against the Danes, it is only a small part of his greatness. There were many stout warriors among the Saxon kings, but only one Alfred. Had he never fought a battle he would yet have deserved a place among the greatest rulers of the world. He was the first English king who gave up his whole life to the welfare of his country. Other kings had regarded their kingship largely as a position to be used for their own pleasure and ambition. Alfred treated his solely as a duty which he owed to his people. He was not content to be merely a king; he was a father to his fatherland, a servant to his own subjects.

Before Alfred could carry out any of his schemes of good government it was needful that the country should be at peace, and no peace was possible until the Danes were overcome. The Danes, then, were his first task.

Precisely the same cause which had brought the Saxons on the Britons was now driving the Danes on the Saxons. The *Danes*, as we are in the habit of calling them, did not come from Denmark alone, but from all North Germany, Scandinavia, and all the coasts of the North Sea. If we call them not Danes, but *Northmen*, we are reminded that they did not raid England only, but the north of France too, and gave their name to the province of Normandy.

The first  
raids (787)

They went still farther afield, however. They made a settlement in South Italy and founded a kingdom in Sicily, twice attacked Constantinople, conquered Iceland, sailed from there to Greenland, and even perhaps reached the coast of America at Vinland, which is thought to be Labrador, centuries before Columbus. In this restless career of adventure, driven from their homes by the same pressure of westward-moving races which had urged the barbarians against the Roman Empire and the Saxons into Britain, we may find repeated the same stages of progress which had marked the Saxon invasion. The first object was plunder; the second stage, settlement; the final stage, conquest.

1st stage:  
plunder

The year 787 saw the first Danish raid into England; on the eastern coasts fell the earliest gusts of the coming storm; since the Danes were heathen they had no scruple in sacking the rich monasteries of Lindisfarne and Wearmouth. As time went on the raids became more numerous, the raiders more daring. Egbert was beaten in 828, but in 837 he won a victory at Hengist's Down. Yet one victory was of little use. In the course of the next three years every summer brought a fresh horde of plunderers, and London, Rochester, and Canterbury were all pillaged.

2nd stage:  
settlement

The middle of the ninth century saw the Danish invasions passing from the first to the second stage. In 851 some Danes, instead of returning home, wintered in Sheppey. This example was soon followed. In 866 an army, greater than any of its predecessors, landed in East Anglia. The next year it ravaged Northumbria; then it advanced into Mercia; checked there, it returned to East Anglia, and slew King Edmund, whose name is commemorated in Bury St. Edmunds.<sup>1</sup> The year 871 saw it again push southwards into Wessex. If Wessex fell, the Danes would be indeed masters of England.

Danish  
attack on  
Wessex

It was this crisis that Alfred had to face. His grandfather,

<sup>1</sup> Edmund, who according to tradition was tied to a tree and shot to death with arrows, was later recognized as a saint, and many churches in East Anglia were dedicated to him.

Egbert, had died in 839, leaving a son, Ethelwulf, who had reigned till 858. He left behind him four sons, of whom Alfred was the youngest. By 866 the two elder ones had passed away, and the third, Ethelred, was on the throne. Aided by Alfred, he prepared to drive back the invaders.

This was no easy task. Men who had the daring to face the storms of the North Sea, and even to round the wild western coasts of Iceland in their low, undecked vessels driven by oars, were not likely to want courage on land.

Ethelred and Alfred did not make a promising beginning. They tried to storm the Danish camp situated in the tongue of land between the Kennet and Thames, near Reading. The assault failed, and though the Danes, being emboldened by success to abandon their usual tactics and risk a battle in the open, were routed by Alfred at *Ashdown*, yet the English lost so many men that they were beaten at Basing, and again at Marden in Wiltshire, in which latter fight Ethelred was killed. He left children, but Alfred was chosen to succeed him. It was no time for a child on the throne. Alfred tried his luck once again at *Wilton*, but although his men at first forced the Danes back, yet they rallied and once more were victorious.

Efforts of  
Ethelred  
and  
Alfred

Battles of  
Ashdown  
and Wilton  
(871)

Danish  
advance

This was desperate fighting. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says, "Nine battles were fought this year south of the Thames", and the balance of victories did not rest with Alfred. But though the English did not win the battles, yet they won the campaign, for in the next year the Danes, having no stomach for more of such bloody work, withdrew eastward and northward to regions where they met less stout foemen, and Alfred had a little breathing space.

In 877 the storm gathered afresh. In the depths of winter the Danish leaders Guthrum and Hubba declared war. Guthrum swooped down on Alfred's royal town of Chippenham before Alfred could gather a force. The King himself, almost without followers, had to take refuge in the isle of Athelney,

Guthrum  
takes  
Chippen-  
ham

Alfred at  
Athelney

a marshy stronghold protected by the waters of the Tone and Parret.<sup>1</sup> Never before or after were his fortunes at so low an ebb, but he did not despair. By degrees men joined him. He fell on the Danes at *Ethandun* (Edington), and **Battle of Ethandun (878)** drove them in headlong flight to their stockade. There they were surrounded and starved into submission.

It would, no doubt, have been a more effective blow had the stockade at Chippenham been stormed. A crushing defeat might have struck such terror into the Danish counsels that they might well have judged it wise to leave Alfred alone for the future. But the risk of defeat was great, and it was not Alfred's policy. He no longer hoped to clear the Danes out from England altogether. To carry on war to the death might be attractive to a king, thirty years old, at the head of a victorious army. But Alfred never made war for his own glory. He was a statesman who looked to the good of his people. So he put aside glittering dreams of conquest, and was ready to allow the Danes to settle down in the north and east, provided they would be quiet neighbours. This is clear from the terms he made with Guthrum, in the *Treaty of Wedmore* (879). **Alfred and Guthrum come to terms**

The first condition of this treaty was that Guthrum and his men should become Christians. Thus one great hindrance in the way of a peaceful union was removed; and, as the Danes were of much the same race as the English, spoke a kindred language, and had very similar institutions, there was no race-hatred between the two, such as had prevented the Saxons and Britons from living together in amity. The Saxon had hated the Dane, not because he was a Dane, but because he plundered and robbed. When he gave up these habits he could be tolerated. **Treaty of Wedmore (879)**

The line of division settled in the Treaty of Wedmore was the Watling Street; but a few years later Alfred got a better frontier. Henceforth the line ran up the estuary of the **Boundary between Danes and English**

<sup>1</sup> "Alfred's Jewel", now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, was found here.



Thames to the Lea, along that river to Hertford, and across to Bedford, then followed the Ouse till it struck the Watling Street, and from there to Chester. Roughly speaking, the north and east lay in Guthrum's hands; the south and west remained to Alfred. He lost in the extent of his territory, but the hold of Wessex over Northumbria and Anglia had not been firm. In the end he was stronger in a more concentrated kingdom, and he retained London and most of the larger towns.

The Treaty of Wedmore freed Alfred from Guthrum, but at any moment a fresh band of marauders might come. To guard against this danger was Alfred's next care. He improved his army by increasing the number of the thegns, thus strengthening its leadership. Further, he arranged that the fyrd should be divided into three parts, each of which would serve for a month at a time, thus securing a more permanent force from this somewhat disorderly and untrained body.<sup>1</sup> He also in towns and elsewhere made "burhs", or fortified posts, on the Danish frontier for checking raiders. But, best of all, he was the first to see that England's safety lay in a *fleet*: the best way to meet the Danes was to fight them at sea. He built, as the *Chronicle* tells us, "long ships that were full nigh twice as long as the others; some had sixty oars,<sup>2</sup> some more; they were both swifter and steadier than the others". It is somewhat curious that though the English had themselves in early days been sea rovers, yet they had lost their taste for the sea, and Alfred had at first to employ Frisians to man his ships. Soon, however, the English became good seamen, and the fleet, the importance of which was first realized by Alfred, became England's best safeguard.

The wisdom of these precautions was shown when, at the end of his reign, Alfred had to meet a fresh invasion of Danes led by Hastings, "the worst man that ever was

<sup>1</sup> The members of the fyrd were always anxious to return to the duties of their farms.

<sup>2</sup> The usual Danish ship had thirty-two oars.



born ". Alfred's new army was able to storm the Danish camp on the Lea, to shatter another force at Buttington in Montgomery, and finally by a great stroke to blockade and capture the Danish fleet in a narrow part of the river Lea. In 897 the Danes gave up the game and made off to join their kinsmen in Normandy, where we shall hear of them again. In England, for the present, they had found that, as a Norse poet sang:

" They got hard blows instead of shillings,  
And the axe's weight instead of tribute ".

and they judged it best to leave Alfred alone.

Alfred deserves to be remembered for what he did to keep his realm safe, yet no less honour is due for what he did to make it well governed. He set in order the laws, and took such good care that the reeves and aldermen should enforce them, that in later days when troubles came again men longed for the " laws of King Alfred ". From his youth up he had been a scholar, always anxious to learn

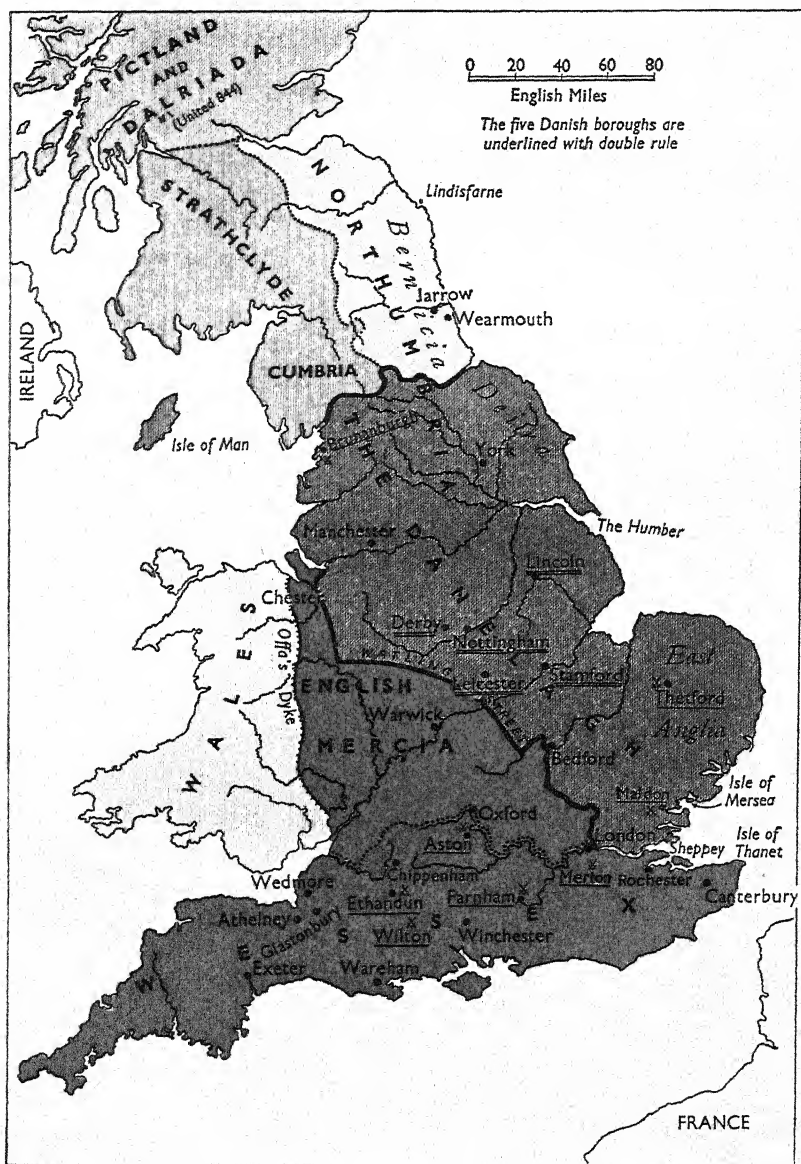
and ready to teach. It was his wish that every freeborn youth " should abide at his book till he can well understand English writing ". That his people should have books

English books

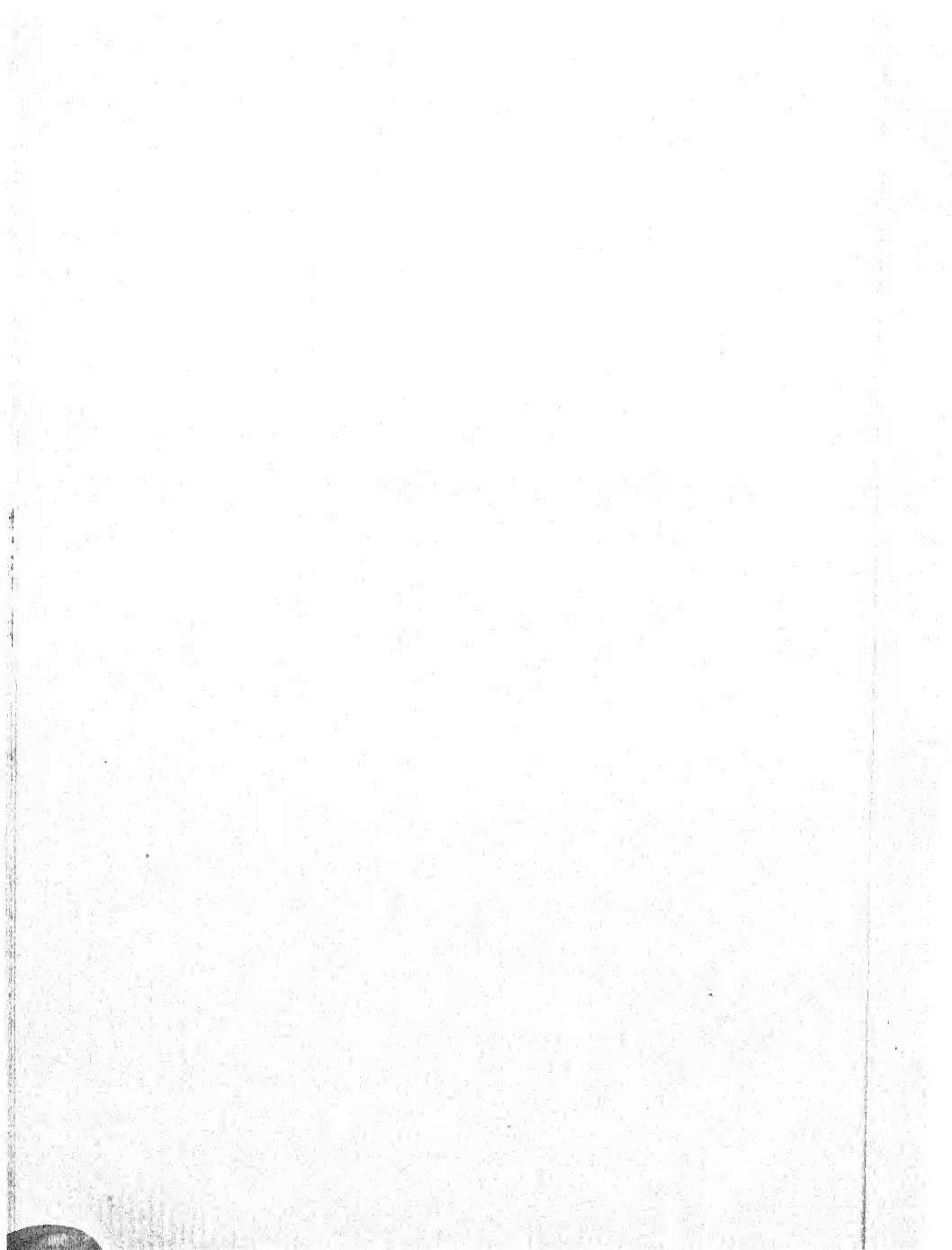
to read in English; he translated from the Latin not only books on religion—the *Consolation* of Boethius and the *Pastoral Care* of Pope Gregory—but also books on history and geography, such as Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* and Orosius' *History and Geography*. At times, too, he did more than translate; he added to the books whatever seemed interesting to himself. Thus he put into Orosius' book the accounts of two voyages northwards to the White Sea and eastwards along the Baltic, made by Othere and Wulfstan, whom Alfred had himself sent out.

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

Even more valuable was the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which was begun at this time. This chronicle, which began its story with the coming of the English, and was continued year by year from Alfred's time, is the best record we have for what happened before the Norman Conquest.



ENGLAND AFTER THE TREATY OF WEDMORE (886)



A king who was so fond of learning was sure to attract scholars to his court. Nor did Alfred neglect the Church. The plunderings of the Danes had left churches in ruins and monasteries desolate. He gave largely from his own income to rebuild them; he even went further, setting up an abbey for monks at Athelney to commemorate God's mercies to him there, and another religious house for nuns at Shaftesbury. His own daughter did not disdain to be Head of this. Further, the churchmen themselves were in nearly as evil plight as the churches. At the beginning of his reign Alfred tells us that even south of the Humber there were "few priests who could render his service-book into English", while in the north the state of the church was still worse. Thanks to Alfred's efforts this ignorance was amended. He took care to choose good bishops and trusted them to make the lower clergy do their duty. (*Note 7.*)

The Church

Monas-  
teries

Priests

Bishops

However we look at Alfred, whether as a warrior, as a statesman, as a lawgiver, as a scholar, as a reformer, he appears equally great. Yet with all his greatness he kept all through his life the nature of a modest and simple man. "I desire," said he in his latest days, "to leave to them that come after me a remembrance of me in good works. So long as I have lived I have striven to live worthily." None can doubt that the task which this great king set himself was nobly done.

## CHAPTER 6

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE SAXONS

Alfred died in 901<sup>1</sup>; Ethelred II, whose reign marks the downfall of all that Alfred had done, came to the throne in 978. This chapter passes in review the seventy-eight years

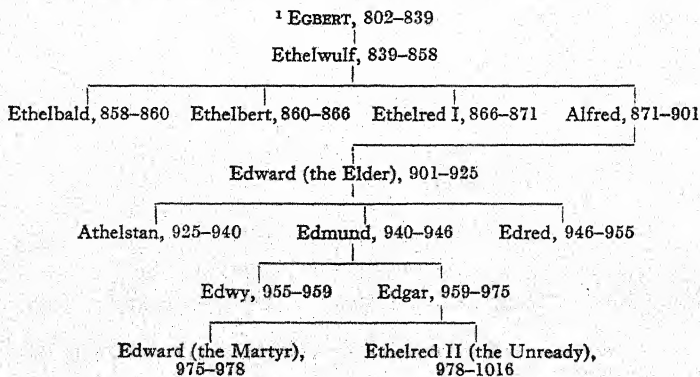
<sup>1</sup> Alfred probably died in 899 (see B. A. Lees, *Alfred the Great*) but the date usually accepted is 901.

that elapse between the two kings each justly named, the one "Alfred the Great", the other "Ethelred the Unready", or "Redeless".

It is not altogether easy to find any one distinguishing mark of the period; yet if we take it down to 975 we may fairly call it "Three Generations of Strong Kings", for, reckoning the one son, three grandsons, and two great-grandsons<sup>1</sup> sprung from Alfred, only one (Edwy) showed no good qualities as a ruler. We may remark further that these three generations all carried on Alfred's work. They did not attempt to extirpate the Danes, but they gradually brought them under their sway, so that the two races began to join into one, and the house of Wessex again became supreme over all England. Finally, in the latter part of the period we shall notice a great increase in the political power of the Church; we shall see, too, the first of that long line of ecclesiastical statesmen who appear and reappear for many centuries in English history.

With these somewhat slender threads to join a series of events which are naturally rather disconnected we may bind together the story of Alfred's descendants.

*Edward the Elder* shone chiefly as a warrior. The title which he took — "King of the English" instead of "King of the West Saxons" — indicates his life's work. He set



himself to recover the *Danelaw*, that district which his father had been forced to give up. The task was easier than it might seem, since the Danes of the Danelaw were not united under one ruler. None the less Edward had to proceed with caution. Aided by his warlike sister, Ethelfleda, who ruled the Midlands for him under the title of the "Lady of the Mercians", he first completed the series of fortified posts which Alfred had begun. Then moving over the border he attacked the group of Danish towns on the Upper Ouse. One by one, Bedford, Huntingdon, Northampton, Cambridge, yielded to him. Ethelfleda led an army against the Five Danish Boroughs in the valley of the Trent, and captured Derby and Leicester. She died in 918, but Edward carried on the work. At length, in 925, when he was setting out on a final invasion of the north, he was met by envoys from all the northern powers, from the Danes of Northumbria, the Britons of Strathclyde, and the Angles of Bernicia, who swore to take him to "father and lord". Constantine, King of the Scots, is also said to have made an agreement with him, not improbably a military alliance. The point would have no importance but for the circumstance that four hundred years later King Edward I (Plantagenet) interpreted this agreement as evidence that the King of Scots had become the vassal king of Edward the Elder, and used this to support his claim to overlordship of Scotland. The chronicle entry is of doubtful authenticity.

Attempts  
to recover  
the Dane-  
law

Danish  
boroughs  
taken

Agree-  
ment with  
Scots

That the submission of the various peoples was merely nominal became clear enough in the reign of Edward's son, *Athelstan*. Athelstan first married his sister to Sigtric, Danish king of Northumbria, but on the death of that king did not hesitate to drive out his kinsman's sons and seize the kingdom for himself. Conduct of this kind made the other northerners uneasy. Constantine gave help to Sigtric's sons, and got together a vast league against Athelstan. Danes of Northumbria and Britons of Strathclyde (the great

Athelstan  
(925-940)

League  
against  
Wessex

Athelstan  
victorious  
at Brun-  
anburh  
(937)

district which included all the south-west of Scotland except Galloway) joined him. All who had allied with Edward a few years before were now ready to war against Athelstan. Even Danes from Ireland under King Anlaf came over to help their kinsmen. Athelstan, however, was a match for them all. He met the allies at *Brunanburh*, and, in the greatest battle yet seen in England, utterly defeated them. The fight lasted all day, a series of desperate assaults by the Saxons on the "burh" or earthwork in which the invaders had fortified themselves. The old triumph song tells us:

Here gat King Athelstan  
And eke his brother  
Eadmund Atheling  
Life long glory  
At swords edge  
Round Brunanburh  
Shield-wall they cleft  
War-lindens hewed  
Sithen sun up  
Till the bright being  
Sank to his settle.

Anlaf fled back to Ireland with but a handful of men. Constantine, "the hoary war man", left his eldest son dead on the field. Athelstan's triumph was complete.

Edmund  
(940-946)

His brother *Edmund*, who succeeded him in 940, had, however, again to fight for his power in the north. It was, in fact, the regular thing that the Danes should revolt with each new ruler and try his mettle. Edmund was no less sturdy than Athelstan. He reduced the rebels, and to punish the King of Strathclyde, who had helped them, he attacked that kingdom and is said to have granted it to Malcolm, King of Scots. This "grant", if it was ever made, lapsed when Malcolm died, and is another historical molehill which a later age came to regard as a mountain. Together with Constantine's "submission" to Edward the Elder, this forms one ground of the claim to the over-

Strath-  
clyde and  
Scots



lordship of Scotland which Edward I was to put forward.

Edmund had reigned only six years when he was murdered by an outlaw whom he was endeavouring to drag from his banqueting-hall. His younger brother, *Edred*, had also a short, but not an inglorious reign. Three things about him deserve note. First, as was always the case when a brother succeeded in place of the late king's young son, the crown was given to him *by a decision of the Witan*: but in this particular Witan sat, not only Englishmen, but Danes and Welshmen. The complete union of England was apparently not far off, when men of three races could meet in one assembly to choose their ruler. Second, after suppressing the usual rebellion in Northumbria, Edred divided it, not into shires, which would have been ruled by ealdormen, but into two huge *earldoms*. This creation of "earls"<sup>1</sup> with wide dominions was a dangerous policy, from which were to come serious troubles in the future. And third, Edred's friend was the great churchman, *Dunstan*.

Although Dunstan had been brought up in the abbey of Glastonbury, he had no wish at first to enter the Church. He came to seek his fortune at King Athelstan's court. The other courtiers were jealous of his learning or annoyed by his wit, and they resolved to make him ridiculous. As he was riding across a marsh they threw him from his horse and rolled him in the mire. Dunstan left the court in disgust, fell sick of a fever, and when he recovered became a monk. Athelstan, sorry for his courtiers' rudeness, recalled him to court. Edmund again dismissed him, but two days later changed his mind. The reason is given us in a well-known story. Edmund was hunting near Cheddar; the chase swept to the edge of Cheddar cliffs; stag and hounds went headlong over, and the king seemed unable to check his horse. In the agony of the moment he vowed to make amends to Dunstan if he was saved, and the horse just pulled up on the edge. In gratitude for his escape Edmund

<sup>1</sup> Danish, *jarl*.

made Dunstan Abbot of Glastonbury. Edred took him for his chief adviser.

Dunstan had won the confidence of one king, but this Edwy (955-959) was no guarantee that he would be equally favoured by the next. He was again to experience the uncertainty of fortune. *Edwy*, who succeeded Edred, fell into the hands of the party who hated the monks. Consequently he soon quarrelled with Dunstan. Dunstan rebuked him for affronting all the nobles of his court by leaving the table at his coronation-feast, and even led him back by the hand like a sulky boy. Edwy retorted by driving Dunstan into exile. This angered all the monkish party, but they were still more set against the king for marrying a wife who was within the "prohibited degrees" in relationship. Archbishop Odo declared it no marriage; all Edwy's most powerful subjects revolted, and set up his brother *Edgar* as king. England divided between Edwy and Edgar Edwy was left merely the part of England that lay south of the Thames. It seemed that England might be split up once again, but fortunately Edwy's death put an end to the difficulty. The whole realm came under Edgar's allegiance.

This prince is aptly called the "Peaceful". While Edgar Edgar the Peaceful (959-975) was on the throne, the long term of Saxon prosperity that had had its spring with Alfred, and its summer under Edward and Athelstan, remained unbroken. It was indeed drawing to an end; Edgar's reign wore the peacefulness of an autumn, so calm and fair that it leads men to forget how soon it must pass away. Since Edgar's first act was to recall Dunstan in power Dunstan, and as Dunstan remained his trusted minister throughout, we may find in the events of the reign the best example of Dunstan's policy.

Dunstan, we have seen, was a monk; Edgar made him Archbishop of Canterbury (960). Thus the first field for his activity lay in Church affairs. It happened that at this Monastic revival time there was a great revival in monastic affairs going on on the Continent. The Benedictine monks of Cluny, who led stern, hard, self-sacrificing lives, were everywhere taken

as models. In one respect the secular<sup>1</sup> clergy were not doing what the Church expected them to do. It was thought right that they should remain, like the monks, unmarried. At this time, however, this rule was badly kept. Many of the seculars had wives, and this gave great offence. Dunstan did his best to encourage the reforms. He tried to make the seculars remain unmarried, but he was not altogether successful. Under these circumstances it became the fashion to think a great deal of monks and less of the secular clergy. This showed itself not only in the revival of old monasteries and the setting up of new ones, but also in the practice of turning out the seculars from positions of dignity and putting monks in their places. Thus the secular canons of the Cathedral of Winchester were turned out, and monks installed instead of them. The same thing was done at Worcester. No doubt, in some respects, the change was for the better; the monks led stricter lives, and they were more learned. But it raised a great jealousy between regulars and seculars. Although Dunstan, as head of the Church, may be said to have approved of those changes which some of his bishops made, he did not make them in his own see. The real reform that he was anxious for was that the clergy should be better educated.

Clunian reforms

Monks replace canons

Education of clergy

It would be a mistake to look on Dunstan merely as a churchman. He was more than that. He was a great statesman. To him we may attribute the wise policy by which Edgar made friends of the Danes settled in England, making some ealdormen, others bishops, and admitting many to his Witan. He also continued to keep on good terms with the kings of the Scots. Indeed, just as Edmund is said to have handed over Strathclyde to Malcolm, so Edgar, we are told, gave Lothian to Kenneth. But there is little evidence to support this assertion and Lothian was conquered by the Scots fifty years later.

Dunstan's policy

<sup>1</sup> Monks, friars, and others who lived under a rule like that of St. Benedict, or in later days like those of St. Francis or St. Dominic, were called "regulars" (Lat. *regula*). The rest of the clergy were called "seculars".

Though we may give Dunstan the credit of much that was done in Edgar's reign, yet the King showed himself a capable ruler. He issued improved laws, and travelled frequently over his realm to see that they were kept. More than that, he made the inhabitants of each "hundred" responsible for any misdeeds committed there. He enlarged the fleet and himself made frequent voyages with it. And even if we distrust the old story that he was rowed across the Dee by six vassal-kings, yet none the less we may find a truth expressed in it. It is a picturesque way of saying that he was a prosperous and powerful monarch, and there was none found in Britain to rival his greatness.

Edgar's  
reforms in  
adminis-  
tration

## CHAPTER 7

### THE SAXON DOWNFALL

From Egbert to Edgar may be called the Golden Age of Saxon history. Kings and people alike were vigorous: enemies abroad were beaten off, rebellions at home crushed, law and justice enforced, learning encouraged. We have likened Edgar's reign to a fine autumn: we may go further, and say that after him came winter fierce and stormy. In the next ninety years, from the reign of Edward the Martyr till the death of Harold (975-1066), Saxon England went from one calamity to another. The kingdom could not even preserve itself from foreign conquest; we shall see a time of Danish attack ending in a Danish monarch on the throne, and then a time of Norman interference ending in the Norman Conquest. It will be convenient to divide the whole period into two parts corresponding to these two foreign influences, but through the whole we can trace in many of the chief men a decay of the old Saxon valour and self-reliance, and a new growth of indecision, discontent, treachery, that gave the foreigner his oppor-

The  
Saxon  
downfall  
(975-1066)

Foreign  
invasions

Internal  
collapse

tunity. There are brilliant exceptions: Edmund Ironside and Harold must not be forgotten. But fate was unkind enough to cut off both of them before they could do more than show their budding promise, while it left the incapable Ethelred and the feeble Edward the Confessor ample leisure to reap the whole harvest of their own incapacity.

The grouping of the events of this time shows a certain symmetry which it is well to bear in mind. From the accession of Ethelred the Unready to the Norman Conquest is a period of eighty-seven years. The middle part of it (1017-1042) is occupied with the Danish kings on the throne (Canute and his sons); the beginning part and the end part are covered by Saxon kings. Further, the beginning and end parts have a strong resemblance. Each period starts with a *long* reign of a *feeble* king followed by a very *short* reign of a *vigorous* king; each alike ends in a *foreign* conquest.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. THE DANISH CONQUEST OF ENGLAND

(975-1042)

The story of the Saxon downfall opens ominously with murder. The young King Edward, riding past his step-mother's castle at Corfe, halted at the door and asked for a cup of wine. The treacherous queen brought it herself, and while the king was drinking it made one of her men stab him in the back, that her own son, *Ethelred*, might get the throne. For eight-and-thirty years England was to regret that deed, for Ethelred's reign proved one of the worst in her history.

Murder of  
Edward

### <sup>1</sup> PERIOD I (Saxon kings):

Long reign of *Ethelred the Unready*,  
978-1016.

Short reign of *Edmund Ironside*,  
1016.

Ending in Danish conquest  
and Danish kings, 1016-  
1042.

### PERIOD II (Saxon kings):

Long reign of *Edward the Confessor*,  
1042-1066.

Short reign of *Harold*, 1066.

Ending in Norman conquest, 1066, and Norman kings.

Ethelred's name of the Unready or Redeless — that is to say, "the Man Lacking in Counsel" — fitly describes him. He was selfish, idle, weak. He had not the vigour to control the great earls and ealdormen in whose hands a strong king like Edgar had been able safely to leave so much of the government of the country. Instead of being useful servants of the state, these men became jealous and quarrelsome, struggling for their own power, and neglecting their duties. The Danes swooped down upon an England in the hands of an incapable king and disloyal officials, and by this time the Danes were even more formidable than they had been in Alfred's reign. Norway and Denmark were now each of them kingdoms. The invaders were no longer plunderers, but trained warriors, obeying the commands of a king who, being sure of help from a mass of his kinsmen already settled in the country, aimed at nothing less than a complete conquest.

England's need was desperate; yet never was she left so utterly without help by her king and leaders. There was only one remedy; it was to fight, and fight hard. Yet when the invaders came they found England an easy prey, for, as the *Chronicle* says, "no shire would help other". Then, by the advice of Sigiric, who had succeeded Dunstan, Ethelred made another plan for dealing with the Danes: instead of hard blows he gave them money; he tried to buy them off with the *Danegeld*, a tax which he made his luckless subjects pay. This policy, however, only put off the evil day to a still worse to-morrow. The Danes, paid once, came back again and again for more, and they brought fresh swarms with them. *Danegeld*, first imposed in 991, was taken again in 994, in 1002, and in 1011. As Ethelred's Witan approved of the tax, it is plain that it was not the King alone who had fallen from the valour of the old days. We feel that England has come on evil days when we read of one army "that it was the leaders first who began the flight"; of another, "when they were east, then men held our force west; and

Ethelred  
the "Un-  
ready"  
(978-  
1016)  
an in-  
capable  
ruler

Fresh  
Danish  
invasions

Saxons  
divided

Danegeld

Witan  
agrees  
Danegeld  
to be paid

when they were south, then was our force taken north "; of another, " through something was flight ever resolved upon, and so the enemy ever had the victory "; or, again, that the King's most trusted ealdorman, Edric, betrayed his plans to the enemy; or, again, that after more than twenty years' harrying, the Witan had no more practical advice to recommend than a three days' fast and a daily chanting of the third psalm, " in order that God may grant us that we overcome our foes "; and, finally, that Ethelred himself would never risk his own person in a battlefield.

Cowardice  
of Saxons

Unfortunately, Ethelred's feebleness was not the worst of him: having by one act brought the Danes into England, he made them his lasting foes by another. He had recourse to treachery. Suddenly, in a time of truce, when he had got rid of the Norwegians by a treaty with their king, Olaf, and pacified the Normans by a marriage with Emma, the sister of their duke, he caused a number of Danes, including some of his own Danish mercenaries and hostages, to be murdered. This "*Massacre of St. Brice's Day*" drew down on him the whole might of Denmark, for among the victims so slain were the sister of Sweyn, King of Denmark, and her husband.

Treachery  
of  
Ethelred

Massacre  
of  
St. Brice  
(1002)

Ethelred, like all weak kings, was a prey to bad favourites. He chose as his friend Edric, Earl of Mercia, and married him to his sister Edith. Edric may at the outset have meant to act with vigour against the Danes, but he turned out a very prince of traitors. His nickname of Streona, " the Grasper ", shows that his guiding star was avarice and selfishness. He soon appeared in his true colours. His rivals at home he got rid of by murder, and he was perfectly ready to betray his country to the enemy. In 1013 Sweyn invaded England in person: there was nothing to stop him; he swept through Northumbria, the Midlands, the west. Edric betrayed his master and persuaded the Witan to offer Sweyn the throne. London alone stoutly held out for Ethelred, till it heard that the miserable man

Evil coun-  
sellors:  
Edric  
Streona

Sweyn of  
Denmark  
invades  
England

Flight of  
Ethelred



had deserted his post and fled to Normandy. He came back to England after Sweyn's death, but two years later he died himself.

After his death the greater part of England, being in The Danish hands, acknowledged Sweyn's son, *Canute*, as king. There was one honourable exception. London held true to the line of Alfred, and chose Ethelred's son, Edmund.

Edmund, who gained by his bravery the name of "Ironside", was of very different mould from his feeble father. He gathered an army, and twice fought with Canute's men at Panselwood and Sherston. Neither battle was decisive, but gathering fresh forces Edmund drove the Danes off London and won a victory at Brentford; a fourth hurled a number of them into the isle of Sheppey; these successes brought the traitor Edric over again to Edmund's side to be a fresh curse to his race, for in the fifth fight, when Edmund was engaged against the whole weight of Canute's forces at *Assandun* (Ashington in Essex), the day was lost only because Edric again deserted on the battlefield and went over once more to the Danes. Some months later Edmund died suddenly — possibly he was murdered by Edric — and in despair the nation took Canute as king. There is a certain just retribution in the fact that one of the first things Canute did was to have Edric put to death.

Canute, though a foreign conqueror, was a good king. He was infinitely more powerful than any king of the house of Wessex, for England was merely a province in his dominions. The King of Scots is said to have done homage to him, though the grounds for the assertion are doubtful. He was also King of Denmark, and in 1028 he subdued Norway, so that he seemed to be on the way to become an emperor of the north, a northern Charlemagne. But his might gave England that peace of which she stood sorely in need. War came to an end with the triumph of the enemy, and the enemy turned into a good friend. No rebellions broke the serenity of his reign. Towns grew rich

The Danish Conquest

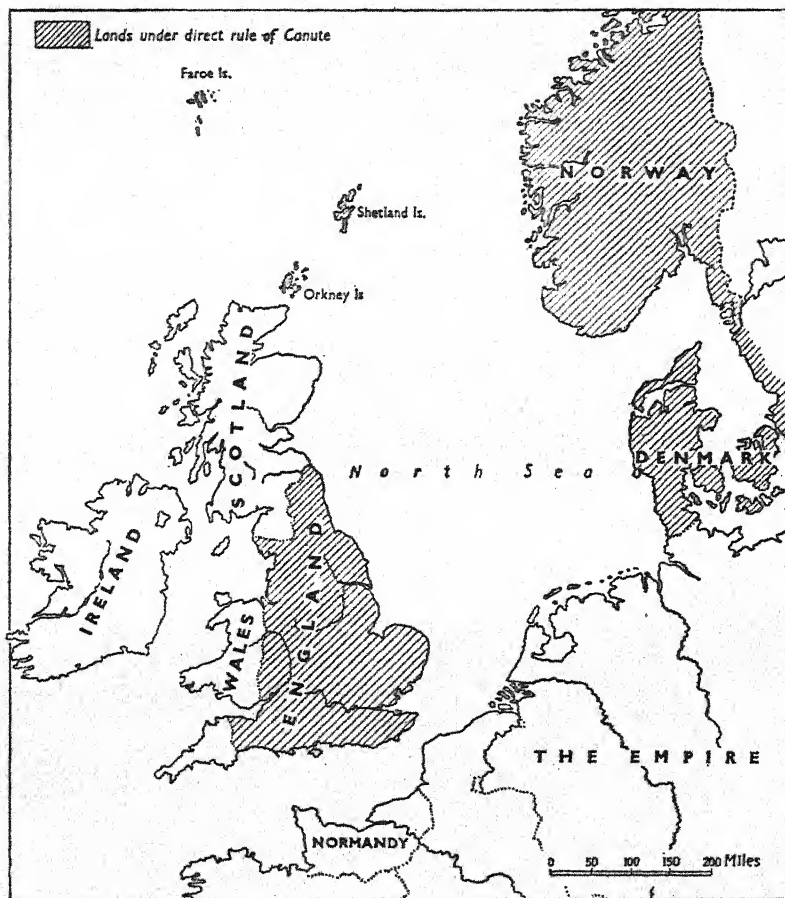
Resistance of Edmund Ironside (1016)

Defeated at Assandun by treachery

Death of Edmund

Victory of Canute

Canute King of England, Denmark, and Norway (1016-1035)



CANUTE'S EMPIRE

Prosperity  
of England  
under  
Canute

and prosperous, for the Danes were great traders, and Canute's wide possessions gave merchants new chances for trade. He ruled sternly but fairly. He married Ethelred's widow, and so joined himself to the old royal family. He employed Danes and English alike; the Earls of Northumbria and East Anglia were Danes, those of Mercia and Wessex were Englishmen. The name of the last officer, Godwin, we shall have occasion to remember. Canute felt so certain of the loyalty of his new subjects that he was able to send home all his Danish army, save only a small body-guard of "house-carles", and even this consisted in part of Englishmen. This shows that he was loved, just as the old story of his rebuke to the flattering courtiers, who urged him to forbid the tide to come any farther, shows that he had a reputation for wisdom.

Canute's "Laws" show how he welded the country together, and how Danes and Saxons were settling down into a community with a written code of laws which all were to obey. (*Note 7.*)

Canute's eldest son Sweyn succeeded him in Norway. The two others, *Harold Harefoot* and *Hardicanute*, divided England, the north obeying Harold, Wessex and the south Hardicanute. The latter spent most of his time in Denmark, so that the chief power fell into the hands of his mother, Emma, and as Hardicanute tarried long in Denmark the whole realm came into Harold's hands; but Harold dying in 1040, Hardicanute became king. He in his turn did not survive long, and with him the Danish dominion in England came to an end.<sup>1</sup>

Canute's  
sons:  
Harold  
and Har-  
dicanute  
(1035-  
1042)

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to speculate what would have been the history of England had Canute's descendants been "three generations of strong kings"—as Alfred's were.

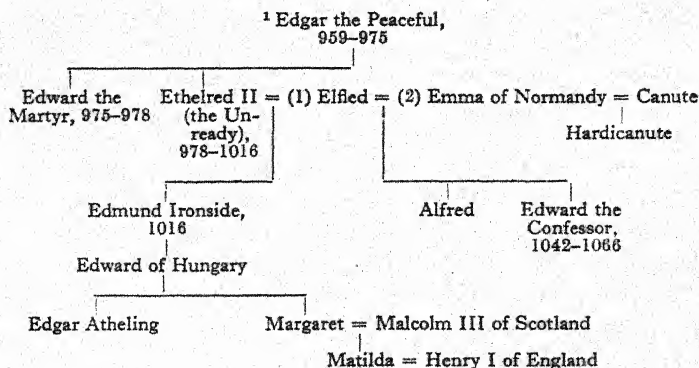
## 2. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR AND THE NORMANS

When Hardicanute died, the Witan had to choose a fresh king. They went back to the old West Saxon house, and giving up the Danish dynasty chose *Edward*, second son of Ethelred the Unready.<sup>1</sup> Since this King's reign saw the rise of Norman influence in England, our first task is to trace the chief links that were drawing England and Normandy into closer connection.

The Witan chooses a Saxon king  
Edward the Confessor (1042-1066)  
Norman influence on Edward

The Normans were in origin Northmen, just as were the Danes who had so long harassed England. For many years they had raided the north of France under the leadership of Rolf the Ganger. In 913 the French King, Charles the Simple, had "granted" to the Danish leader the land which he could not keep. Thus began the line of the great Dukes of Normandy. Once settled in France the Northmen soon grew very different from their Danish kin. They began to use the French tongue and French customs, and became much more polished and civilized. It has always been a curious mark of the Northmen that wherever they went, when once fighting was over, they were ready to adopt the customs and generally the language of the place, and thus got on well with the original inhabitants. Though by nature

Normans and Normandy



rough and wild, they could, it seemed, put on any civilization, as if it were a garment.

Northman in Normandy would naturally be ready to help Northman in England; and we have seen that the Danes often used Normandy as a base from which to attack, or as a shelter when beaten. But the earliest connection between England and the Norman house was made when Ethelred married Emma, daughter of Richard I of Normandy. A Norman queen is the first link in the chain of events that led, some sixty years later, to a Norman king. Emma's influence, however, went over to the Danish side. After Ethelred's death she married the Dane, Canute, and devoted herself to placing her Danish son, Hardicanute, on the throne. But her second son by her first husband was destined to draw still closer the bond between England and Normandy.

This second son, Edward the Confessor, was indeed more of a Norman than an Englishman. He came to the throne at the age of about thirty-five. The past twenty-five years of his life had been spent continuously in Normandy. Norman speech was at least as familiar to him as English. All his friends and habits were Norman. England knew nothing of him; and he knew nothing either of English statesmen or English ways. Above all he favoured churchmen.<sup>1</sup> When he became King he wanted to surround himself with his Norman friends, and to raise them to posts of honour. Thus Robert, Abbot of Jumièges, who, we are told, was trusted by the King "as no other man was trusted", became successively Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury; another Norman followed him in the see of London; a third, the King's nephew, was Earl of Hereford; another, Richard Scrob, was the first to make the English acquainted with a Norman novelty which was to be the source of much suffering in the days to come: he built

Marriage  
connec-  
tions

Edward  
the Con-  
fessor,  
Norman  
in tastes

Clerical  
influences

<sup>1</sup> He founded Westminster Abbey (1065), and his shrine is one of the chief ornaments of the later building erected by Henry III on the old site.

the first castle in England. All this of course was unpopular. Castles  
 Two parties arose: one the King's friends, Normans and  
 their followers; the other the national or Saxon party at  
 the head of which we find Edward's opponent, *Godwin*. Opposi-  
tion to  
Edward  
 Edward, indeed, owed Godwin an old grudge. In Harold  
 Harefoot's reign Edward's elder brother, Alfred, had landed  
 to try to seize the throne. Godwin had been sent against Godwin  
 him. Since he was Harefoot's officer Godwin was only doing  
 his duty in capturing Alfred. He did his duty, but certainly  
 in a most treacherous way. He met Alfred, pretended to  
 join his side, and then made him and his followers prisoners  
 while they were in their beds. Harold Harefoot caused  
 Alfred to be put to death by thrusting out his eyes. Enmity of  
Edward  
 Edward could hardly forgive Godwin for his share in this  
 brutality.

Thus the history of England from the accession of Edward  
 the Confessor to the Norman Conquest is a struggle on the Godwin's  
sons  
 part of Godwin and his sons, Harold at the head of them,  
 to maintain their power against the King and his Norman  
 friends. Like all periods where a family is of great impor-  
 tance the story is confusing, because it demands a knowledge  
 of relationships. It somewhat resembles the early part of  
 the Wars of the Roses, save that there is no fighting. Edward  
 the Confessor is not unlike Henry VI either in position or  
 character. Just as in Henry VI's reign we hear little of the  
 King, and much of Richard of York, Warwick, Salisbury,  
 and Somerset, so here there will be much to say of Godwin,  
 Harold, Tostig, and William of Normandy, while Edward  
 the Confessor plays a very small part.

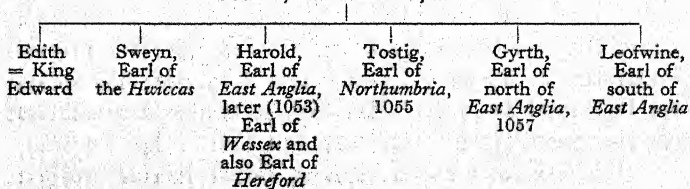
At first Godwin's position was enormously strong. He  
 himself was Earl of Wessex; his eldest son, Sweyn, was Family  
influence  
of Godwin  
 Earl of the Hwiccas, covering the counties of Oxford,  
 Gloucester, Hereford, Berkshire, and Somerset; his second  
 son, Harold, was Earl of East Anglia, which included not  
 only the East Anglia of our day, but Cambridge, Hunting-  
 don, and Essex as well; a nephew, Beorn, held an earldom

covering Dorset and part of Wilts. To crown all, Godwin's daughter, Edith, was Edward's wife. There was no one to equal the family in power.<sup>1</sup> Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and Siward, Earl of Northumbria, could scarcely be called rivals.

By degrees this power began to break up. The King disliked it. His Norman friends tried to thwart Godwin whenever they could. Godwin's eldest son, Sweyn, behaved badly. He fell in love with an abbess, and carried her off. He was outlawed, and his possessions shared between Harold and Beorn. Three years later he came to the English coast, invited Beorn on board his ship, and had him murdered. Godwin's influence was strong enough to get him forgiven after this monstrous offence, but men were offended. Their confidence in Godwin was shaken. His enemies looked out for a chance to overthrow him.

The chance was not long in coming. The King's brother-in-law, Eustace of Boulogne, crossed over from France to see him. On his way back his followers tried to quarter themselves by force on the townsmen of Dover. One man refused to receive these unwelcome guests. Blows were struck, a riot began, and seven of the Frenchmen were killed. Eustace complained to the King, and Edward ordered Godwin to ravage the town as a punishment. Godwin, however, had the good English notion that trial should come before punishment. The men of Dover had not been heard in their own defence. He flatly refused to obey the King's order. The King, urged on by his Norman friends,

<sup>1</sup> Godwin, Earl of Wessex, d. 1053





determined to treat this conduct as rebellion. He summoned a meeting of the Witenagemot at Gloucester, and bade Godwin attend it. Godwin came indeed, but with Harold, Sweyn, and all his armed men at his back. As Leofric and Siward had called out their Mercian and Northumbrian forces on the King's side, it looked as if civil war would break out.

Edward  
treats  
Godwin as  
a rebel

It is, however, the distinguishing mark between this time and the Wars of the Roses, that whereas in the later period any excuse was made to do for war, in the earlier men again and again advanced to the very verge of it, but shrank from taking the fatal step over the verge. The Witan was adjourned to London. Godwin came there protesting his innocence; day by day his followers melted away, "and ever the more the longer he staid". At length Godwin saw that the game was up. He and his sons all fled from the country. They were outlawed; their earldoms given to their enemies.

Flight of  
Godwin  
(1051)

This of itself was enough to make the year 1051 of no pleasant memory, for the fall of Godwin meant the triumph of the Norman party. But another event, more ominous still, was to mark it. This was the visit to England of *Duke William of Normandy*.

Visit of  
William of  
Nor-  
mandy to  
England  
(1051)

It will be more convenient to make a fuller acquaintance with Duke William later, at a time when England was to know him only too well as William the Conqueror. But there is scarcely any doubt on the object of the visit. It was no accident that he came at a time when Edward the Confessor's Norman friends were supreme. The King had no son, and there was no obvious heir. The duke came to spy out the land; and we are told that Edward made him some sort of promise that he should succeed to the throne. Of course Edward had no right to do this. The Crown of England was his, but it was not his to give. None the less, William had got what he wanted; when the time came he would be able to call himself rightful heir to the throne. He had, it must be remembered, some sort of family

Edward  
promises  
William  
the throne

claim, for he and Edward the Confessor were cousins.<sup>1</sup>

Revival of  
Godwin's  
power

Return of  
Harold

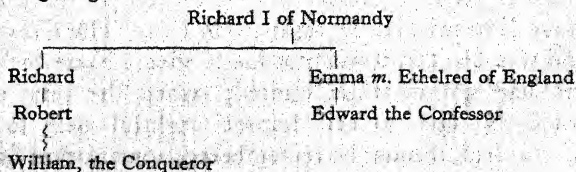
This time, however, was not yet; Godwin had been driven out, but his power was not broken. In 1052 his sons, Harold and Leofwine, landed in the west, where he soon joined them. Again one part of England was arrayed in arms against the other, and once again there was no fighting to speak of. Men "were loath to fight against their own kin"; it was a pity "that Englishmen should destroy one another to make room for foreigners". So, we are told, Edward pardoned Godwin and his sons, and received them back again. Edward was too weak to do anything else. Godwin's forces were stronger than his; the people vowed that "they would live or die with Godwin". If we look for a reason for this sudden devotion to the man from whose side they had melted like snow the year before, it may well be found in William of Normandy's visit and Edward the Confessor's promise. If news of that had leaked out, the people of England were wise in supporting Godwin; perhaps Robert of Jumièges, who had arranged the promise, was wise too. Under usual circumstances an Archbishop of Canterbury would be safe from violence whatever he had done, but it seems that Robert had done something that made him nervous, archbishop though he was, for he fled to the Continent, and two Norman bishops fled with him.

Popular  
support  
for  
Godwin

Godwin's  
death

Close on Godwin's restoration came his death. Unfortunately *Harold* was no better able than his father to resist grasping at land and power for the family. By doing so, he made enemies who were sure to do him an ill turn when

<sup>1</sup> Edward's mother was the daughter of Richard I of Normandy, who was William's great-grandfather.



the chance came. Thus, when Siward of Northumbria died, Harold secured the earldom for his brother *Tostig*, although Siward left a son. Further, he did his best to get hold of the earldom of Mercia, thereby incurring the enmity of Elfgar and his sons, *Edwin* and *Morcar*.<sup>1</sup> Probably in doing so Harold was himself aiming at the throne, yet he was digging the ground from beneath his own feet; his chance of resisting the Normans lay in having England united in his defence; and when the time came it was precisely these three — *Tostig*, *Edwin*, and *Morcar* — who failed him. For the time, however, Harold's prospects were bright. But two misfortunes, towards the end of the reign, weakened him. The first was a stroke of pure ill-luck. A boat in which he was sailing was driven by the weather to the shores of Ponthieu. This was indeed a windfall for the Duke of Normandy. Following the usual uncourteous habit of the time, Harold was made prisoner, and William would not let him go till he had sworn to recognize his claim to the throne. It seems that William saw plain enough who was likely to be his most dangerous rival. The second trouble came from the Northumbrian earldom. There was no prosperity in that ill-gotten gain. The Northumbrians had rebelled against *Tostig* and driven him out. Harold tried vainly to patch up the quarrel, but was obliged in the end to allow them to have as earl *Morcar*, son of *Elfgar*. This boded ill. *Morcar* was no lover of the house of *Godwin*; and *Tostig* went off to the Continent vowing vengeance on the brother who had, as he thought, basely deserted him. (*Note 8.*)

When Edward the Confessor died, on 5th January, 1066,

<sup>1</sup> The shifts among the earldoms are very confusing. Harold succeeded to his father's earldoms in Wessex; by doing so he left East Anglia vacant, and it was given to *Elfgar*, son of *Leofric*, Earl of Mercia. When *Leofric* died, *Elfgar* got Mercia, but could not retain East Anglia, which was shared between Harold's younger brothers, *Leofwine* and *Gyrth*. After that came the struggle in which Harold got *Elfgar* outlawed and seized Mercia. *Elfgar* recovered it, and it eventually passed to his son *Edwin*. The main point to remember is that until *Tostig* was cast out by Northumbria, *Godwin's* sons ruled practically all England, except Mercia. (See table, p. 58).

Harold  
His  
seizure of  
Earldom of Nor-  
thumbria

England  
divided

Harold's  
misfor-  
tunes

Ship-  
wrecked  
in Nor-  
mandy

Rebellion  
in Nor-  
thumbria

**Death of Edward the Confessor** and the Witan chose Harold to succeed him, it was clear that the new king would have need of all his valour and wisdom to keep his throne secure. Edwin and Morcar were jealous of him, since he was not of royal blood<sup>1</sup>; Tostig was beseeching king after king on the Continent for help against his brother; and, most dangerous of all, William of Normandy was gathering a host to assert his claim to the kingdom.

**Harold becomes king (1066)**  
**Career of William of Normandy**

William had already given proof that he was not the man to put his hand to the plough and turn back. Born in 1027, he had succeeded as a boy of seven to what seemed an inheritance of woe. As was always the case under the feudal system, a minority meant a time of wild disorder. Four of the young duke's guardians were assassinated, one after the other. In the midst of battle and murder William formed that strong, relentless character which marked him. In 1047 the whole of the western part of his duchy revolted, but William, with the aid of the King of France, overthrew the rebels at Val-ès-dunes. Step by step his power went forward; he married Matilda, daughter of the Count of Flanders, and so gained a useful ally; he humbled his fiercest rival, Geoffrey of Anjou, and wrested Maine from him; he even beat the armies of his feudal superior, the King of France, and forced him to sue for peace. Harold had to deal with a ruler who, though in name a vassal, was more powerful than his master.

**Preparations for invasion (1066)**

In making ready for his invasion, William left nothing to chance. Not only did he gather his own barons, but he invited help from other parts. The Counts of Brittany and Boulogne joined him, and warriors came from Aquitaine, Anjou, Flanders, and even distant Naples and Sicily. The prospect was attractive. Men were ready for an adventure under the banner of a renowned leader, all the more since they were likely to win lands or plunder by doing so. While

<sup>1</sup> He was Edward the Confessor's brother-in-law; he was also distantly connected (through his mother) with the Danish line of kings.

this great force of the most warlike fighters in Europe was trooping in, William busied himself in the spring and summer of 1066 in building a fleet. In order to justify his invasion he put forward a solemn claim to the throne, reciting the promises of Edward and Harold, and even persuaded the Pope to give his benediction to the enterprise. He had thus enlisted all sorts of forces on his side — love of adventure, the authority of law, greed of gain, and the blessings of the Church.

William's  
fleet

While knights were assembling and ships were building in Normandy, Harold had called out his army to guard the southern shore. Months passed, and the invaders did not come. The Saxon ships that had guarded the Channel were laid up. The old weakness of the fyrd showed itself once more. Men grew tired of waiting, and were beginning to disperse, when the storm burst where it was least expected. Tostig, aided by the King of Norway, landed in Yorkshire, and scattered the army with which Edwin and Morcar sought to resist him. Dangerous as it was to leave the south, Harold had to hurry north. His bodyguard, the house-carles, went with him, and men of the fyrd joined him on the march. He met the invaders at *Stamford Bridge*, on the Derwent, and overthrew them. Tostig and the Norwegian king were both slain. The vast army, which had come in three hundred ships, was so shattered that twenty-four were enough to carry it away.

Harold  
attacked  
in North  
by Tostig  
and  
Hadrada

Battle of  
Stamford  
Bridge  
and  
victory of  
Harold

It was a great victory, but it was Harold's last. The wind, which so often in later years was England's best ally,<sup>1</sup> on this occasion turned traitor. Blowing from the north, it had brought Tostig with it. While Harold was encountering him, it veered to the south, and wafted Duke William over to Pevensey (28th September). "Had I been there," cried Harold, "they had never made good their landing." He hurried his army southward. In nine days they had travelled the 200 miles northward: they fought *Stamford Bridge* on

William  
lands

<sup>1</sup> "Afflavit Deus. 1588."

25th September, started southwards again on 2nd October, were marching out of London by the 11th, and in two days more had covered nearly another 60 miles to the south. This headlong speed left the northern levies under Edwin and Morcar far behind; but the earls were not, it would seem, doing all they could have done to support Harold.

Harold  
invades  
south

It might have been better strategy to wait near London for reinforcements, and compel the enemy to advance and give battle far from his base; but Harold could not look on calmly while the Normans laid the countryside waste; besides, the reinforcements hoped for from Edwin and Morcar might join the foe, and not him. He marched south to fight it out once and for all.

Battle of  
Hastings

The battle that was to decide England's fate was fought on 14th October, 1066. Harold drew up his men on a hill eight miles north of Hastings: through his position ran the road to London; his rear was covered by the woods in which his men, if beaten, might gather again. His soldiers fought on foot; the house-carles in the centre were armed mostly with two-handed axes or long swords; but on the wings he had some hastily raised levies, some armed with clubs, some with spears, some with scythes.

Saxon  
position

William, well pleased that his fortnight's ravaging of the country had drawn his enemy southward and saved him from the difficulties of an advance northwards, through the Weald, moved his men forward to the attack. As they topped the rise of one hill they came in sight of the Saxons drawn up on an opposite slope at Senlac. The Norman strength lay chiefly in the mail-clad cavalry, a force then and for long after held to be superior to any infantry. But the Duke did not rely on his cavalry alone. He had with him a large body of infantry and a number of archers. His men advanced to the attack across the valley in three lines: the archers in front, the infantry behind them, and the horsemen in the rear. The battle began with a volley of arrows, which Harold's men answered with spears, javelins,



throwing axes, and other missiles. This proved too hot for the archers, and William pushed his infantry up to the attack. These reached the firm line of Saxon shields, but could not break it. The real weight of William's forces was then flung into the battle. Up the slope, already dotted with corpses, rode the horsemen; with a tremendous crash they came on, some of them, like Taillefer, penetrating the line and only being struck down inside it. Still the Saxons held firm, and plied their axes vigorously till even the horsemen recoiled, the Breton knights, who formed the left wing, retreating in great confusion. A portion of the shire levies thought the battle was won, and ran down the hill to pursue the foe. But their rash courage proved their ruin. William turned on them with his unbroken centre and destroyed them. They were, however, but a small part of the Saxon force. The rest were still strong and undaunted in their position.

Saxon line  
holds firm

Indeed, so far William had made but little real progress. His attacks on the main Saxon position had been beaten off. He had won only a small success over an ill-disciplined portion of the enemy. Yet this small success proved the key to victory.

A second charge and a prolonged and furious hand-to-hand struggle had cost both sides dear, but the shields still remained steady round the English standards of the Dragon and the Fighting Man. Morning had worn to afternoon when William decided on a stratagem. He ordered a feigned retreat. The Normans appeared to fall back. Again the Saxon levies of the fyrd repeated their mistake. This time a huge mass of them poured from their position, and were again trampled and cut down in the open. All that remained to Harold was his guard, the trustworthy body of house-carles in the centre.

William's  
stratagem

Saxons  
leave their  
position

The last stage in the battle was to overcome this stubborn body. They were subjected to the fiercest trial which soldiers can have to undergo; in turn plied with arrow fire

Harold's  
house-  
carles'  
last stand



to which they could make no reply (since Harold had no bowmen left, and his house-carles had used up their missile weapons), and then charged by the horse. "In the English ranks," says William of Poitiers, chaplain to William of Normandy, "the only movement was the dropping of the dead; the living stood motionless." How fiercely they fought is shown by the fact that Duke William had three horses killed under him. But at last the end came. Harold was struck in the eye by one of the arrows fired in the air: the Norman knights burst into the line: the scanty remainder of the English army scattered into the forest in their rear.

Harold  
wounded

Shakespeare has written:

"This England never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,  
But when it first did help to wound itself".

The period of English history which we have followed in this chapter gives a striking example of this. Twice in ninety years was England at a conqueror's feet. It was not for want of valour. No man was braver than Edmund Ironside or Harold. No man could do more than give his life for his country, and the English army at Hastings poured out its blood like water for its king. It was not the open enemy that was to be feared, but the familiar friend; not the Dane or Norman, but the treacherous Englishman. The falseness of Ethelred, the treachery of Edric, the selfish greed of the house of Godwin, the rebellion of Tostig, the half-heartedness of Edwin and Morcar — these were the true causes of the Saxon downfall.

Causes of  
English  
collapse

## NOTES ON PERIOD ONE (55 B.C.-A.D. 1066)

### IMPORTANT RULERS IN ENGLAND

OFFA (757-796) King of Mercia  
EGBERT (802-839) King of Wessex  
became King of England in 827  
ALFRED (871-901)  
EDWARD THE ELDER (901-925)  
ATHELSTAN (925-940)  
EDGAR THE PEACEFUL (959-975)  
ETHELRED THE UNREADY (978-1016)  
CANUTE (1016-1035)  
EDWARD THE CONFESSOR (1042-1066)  
HAROLD (1066)

### IMPORTANT RULERS IN SCOTLAND

KENNETH MACALPIN (844-859)  
King of Alban  
DUNCAN I (1034-1040)  
First King of Scotland  
MACBETH (1040-1057)

### IMPORTANT FOREIGN RULERS

POPE: GREGORY THE GREAT (590-604)  
Founded the power of the Papacy  
EMPERORS: CHARLEMAGNE (768-814)  
Emperor of the west (800)  
OTTO THE GREAT (936-973)  
Founder of Holy Roman Empire (962)

### NOTE 1. — THE STAGES IN THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF BRITAIN

1. Julius Caesar's two expeditions (55 and 54 B.C.); very brief occupation of Britain, meant chiefly to demonstrate the far-reaching power of Rome.
2. Conquest under the Emperor Claudius (A.D. 43); defeat of Caratacus. Britons defeated by Suetonius Paulinus. Boadicea's rising.

3. Settlement under Agricola; Britain now Romanized (A.D. 78).
  - (a) Britons enlisted in the Roman army.
  - (b) Roads, forts, and towns built.
  - (c) Trade developed.
4. Britain under the later Emperors.
  - A.D. 121. Hadrian's great Wall built, from Solway to Tyne.
  - A.D. 140. The Antonine Wall built from Forth to Clyde.
  - A.D. 208. Severus attacks Caledonia.
  - A.D. 410. Romans released Britons from allegiance.

#### NOTE 2. — CHARACTER OF THE ROMAN INVASION

1. The occupation lasted for over three hundred years, and many towns were built and the country enjoyed prosperity. These towns showed a high level of civilization, with shops, law-courts, and manufactures. Trade flourished, and Britain exported corn, iron, copper, tin, lead, and bricks. She imported fine luxury goods, pottery, and metals.
2. The extent and character of the occupation was obliterated by the later conquest of Britain by the barbarians. Roman culture disappeared, and only the Roman roads remained visible. Modern archaeologists have dug up the buried cities and showed us what had existed (villas and camps), and have thoroughly explored the Walls.

#### NOTE 3. — THE ANGLO-SAXON INVASIONS

1. Early attacks through raids, during the Roman occupation. Driven off by the "Count of the Saxon Shore".
2. Invasion from "Scotland" (tribes from North Britain broke through Hadrian's Wall. 367).
3. Arrival of bands of warriors, followed by regular settlements (A.D. 449); the Saxons reach Sussex and take Anderida, and later Essex and Wessex. The Angles come to East Anglia — the Jutes to Kent.
4. Resistance of the Britons overcome. Britons defeated at *Deorham* (577), and *Chester* (613). This meant that the Britons were driven back and cut off in Cornwall and Wales.

#### NOTE 4. — CHARACTER OF THE SAXON SETTLEMENT

1. Saxon laws and customs, which were based on the "folk" customs, became basis of our institutions. They accustomed the people to local courts, and to take part in local administration (sureties, shire moot, witenagemot).
2. Saxon ranks showed a movement which tended towards the later feudal system. Earls, and *gesiths* and *churls* showed military and land-holding system.

3. Saxon tribal chiefs developed into kings, ruling with the help of councils or assemblies.

NOTE 5.—THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE RISE OF  
THE ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH

1. Christianity was introduced to Britain by the Romans. *St. Alban* the first Christian martyr in England. The Saxons stamped out Christianity in England (but not in Wales).
2. Celtic Church sent missionaries (*St. Columba*, etc.) from Ireland. They worked chiefly in the north and west (Iona, Cornwall, and *St. Asaph*). This Celtic Christianity spread into Northumbria (*St. Cuthbert*).
3. The Roman Church sent a mission.
  - (a) Pope Gregory I sent *Augustine*, who landed in Kent (597), and southern England was gradually converted.
  - (b) Edwin of Northumbria married Ethelburga of Kent, and *Paulinus* went north with her. Northern Christianity overthrown by the heathen King Penda of Mercia.
  - (c) Oswald of Northumbria sent for *Aidan*, a Celtic saint from Iona. Struggle between Celtic and Roman Christianity. At *Synod of Whitby* (664) Northumbria adopted the Roman Church. Thus Britain accepted the control of the Papacy.
4. *Theodore of Tarsus* sent in 668 by the Pope to reorganize the Church in Britain; dioceses set up. Influence of the Church in softening the penalties of the laws, and in spreading culture.
5. During the Danish conquests, much of England became heathen again. Then, under King Edgar (959-75), *Dunstan* revived and reorganized the Church. Brought about great reform of the monastic life.

NOTE 6.—THE RISE OF THE SAXON KINGDOMS (THE HEPTARCHY)

1. Kent was the first Kingdom to rise to power under Ethelbert (d. 616), but was speedily overshadowed by Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex.
2. Northumbria became powerful when its province of *Bernicia* (i.e. Northumberland and Durham) united with *Deira* (Yorkshire) under Ethelfrith (613). *Edwin*, converted by Paulinus, defeated the Scots, and conquered Wessex. Penda attacked him and killed him at *Heathfield* (633). Penda also defeated and killed *Oswald* at *Maserfield* (642). *Oswy* defeated Penda at *Winwaedfield* (655). Penda's son carried on the war and defeated and killed *Oswy's* son *Egfrith* at *Nectansmere* (685). After this Northumbria gradually weakened and decayed.
3. Mercia, the Midland Kingdom, remained heathen under Penda, and defeated Northumbria. She became Christian and under *Offa*

(who built Offa's Dyke) rose to supremacy. He conquered Kent and Essex and drove back the Welsh (757-796). He was recognized as a great King by the Pope, and by the Emperor Charlemagne.

4. After the death of Offa, Mercia fell to pieces, and Wessex now rose, and was to become permanently great. *Egbert* (802-39) defeated the British of Cornwall, defeated Mercia, and became overlord of Mercia, Kent, Northumbria, Sussex, Essex.

#### NOTE 7. — THE DANISH INVASION OF ENGLAND

1. The Danes first began to raid England in 787, and raids continued for fifty years. These were plundering raids.
2. In 851 the Danes first began to settle in the country (Sheppey), in 866 they invaded East Anglia, and in 868 killed King Edmund and ravaged Mercia and Northumbria.
3. 871. Danes attacked *Wessex*, the only Kingdom to hold out. **Alfred the Great** fought *Ashdown* (871) and many other battles, till at *Ethandun* (878) he defeated Guthrum. *Treaty of Wedmore* (879), divided England into two, Wessex and the *Danelaw*. Alfred also built a fleet; organized the army (*fyrð*); encouraged learning.
4. After Alfred's death his successors struggled against the Danes. *Athelstan* defeated them at Brunanburh, and his heirs continued to oppose them. Under *Edgar*, Wessex flourished (959-975), but after his death, the reign of *Ethelred the Unready* marks decline of Wessex. Fresh Danish invasions came from overseas. The payment of *Danegeld* only encouraged further invaders, and in 1013 *Sweyn* invaded and conquered England.
5. **Canute** became the Danish King of England (1016-1035), and was also King of Denmark and Norway. England was now united and prosperous. Canute employed both English and Danes; encouraged the Church; encouraged trade between the parts of his Empire; and codified the laws. At his death, his empire was split up, and the English, after the deaths of his sons, eventually chose a successor from the old Saxon house — Edward the Confessor.

#### NOTE 8. — ENGLAND BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST

1. *Edward the Confessor* had been educated in Normandy, while the Danish kings ruled in England, and was completely Norman in tastes and sympathies.
2. He quarrelled with the English party headed by *Godwin* and his family, who held the earldoms of the Midlands, East Anglia, and Wessex. Finally Godwin was overthrown and exiled (1051). *William of Normandy* then visited England, and Edward possibly promised to make him his heir.

3. Godwin returned, restored to power, but shortly after he died and his place was taken by his son *Harold*. Harold quarrelled with the earls of Mercia (Edwin and Morcar) and with his own brother Tostig, earl of Northumbria. On the death of Edward the Confessor, *Harold* chosen as king, but neither Northumbria nor Mercia supported him.

# TIME CHART FOR PERIOD ONE 55 B.C.-A.D. 1066

| Sovereign. | Events in Britain.  | Dates.  | Events Abroad.  | Dates.                         |
|------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
|            | First landing of Julius Cæsar in Britain.<br>Second landing of Cæsar.   | B.C.<br>55<br>54                                    |   | B.C.<br>44<br>30<br>A.D.<br>41 |
|            | Aulus Plautius conquers South Britain.<br>Revolt of Boadicea.   | A.D.<br>43<br>61                                    | Murder of Julius Cæsar.<br>Augustus Emperor.<br>Claudius Emperor.   | 69<br>81<br>117<br>138         |
|            | Britain ruled by Agricola.<br>Battle of Mons Graupius.  | 77-85<br>84   | Vespasian Emperor.<br>Domitian Emperor.<br>Hadrian Emperor.   | 305<br>395<br>410<br>455       |
|            | Hadrian's Wall begun, from Solway to Tyne.<br>Antonine Wall built between Forth and Clyde.<br>Romans abandon North Britain.   | 120<br>140<br>180                                   | Constantine, First Christian Emperor.<br>Goths revolt, led by Alaric.<br>Honorius Emperor; Sack of Rome by the Goths.<br>Sack of Rome by the Vandals. | 590                            |
|            | St. Ninian preaches in Britain.<br>Romans leave Britain.<br>Jutes land in Kent under Hengist and Horsa.<br>Scots from Ireland settle in Dalriada.<br>Angles settle in Bernicia.<br>St. Columba lands on Iona.<br>Victory of West Saxons at Battle of Deorham. | c. 400<br>410<br>449<br>c. 500<br>547<br>563<br>577 |   |                                |
|            | Augustine's Mission lands in Kent; Ethelbert King of Kent; Death of St. Columba.<br>Battle of Chester; Victory of Angles; Northumbrian supremacy begins.  | 597<br>613  | Gregory the Great, Pope.  |                                |



| Sovereign.                           | Events in Britain.  | Dates.  | Events Abroad.  | Dates.                                    |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                      | Edwin defeated at Heathfield.<br>Aidan's mission to Northumbria.<br>Penda defeated at Winwaedfield.<br>Synod of Whitby; King of Northumbria accepts Roman Christianity.<br>Theodore of Tarsus Archbishop of Canterbury.<br>Mercian supremacy begins; Death of Bede.<br>Building of Offa's Dyke; First Danish raids. | 633<br>634<br>655<br>664<br>668<br>735<br>787 | Death of Mohammed.<br><br><br><br><br><br>Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans.<br>Haroun al-Raschid (Arabia). | 632<br><br><br><br><br><br>800<br>780-809 |
| Offa King of Mercia,<br>757-796.     |   |   |   |   |
| Egbert King of Wessex, 802-839.      | Egbert King of Wessex becomes King of England; Supremacy of Wessex begins.<br>Kenneth MacAlpin King of Picts and Scots.<br>Danes winter in England.<br>Edmund of East Anglia slain; Battles of Ashdown and Wilton.<br>Battle of Ethandun; Treaty of Wedmore.<br>Reconquest of the Danelaw.                          | 827<br>844<br>851<br>870<br>878<br>910-26     | Cluniae reforms; Duchy of Normandy founded.   | 910                                       |
| Alfred the Great of Wessex, 871-901. |   |   |   |   |
| Edward the Elder, 901-924.           | Battle of Brunanburh.   | 937   |   |   |
| Athelstan, 925-940.                  | Dunstan Archbishop.   | 960   | Otto of Germany Holy Roman Emperor.   | 962                                       |
| Edgar the Peaceful, 959-975.         | Danish raids begin again.<br>Massacre of Danes on St. Brice's Day.<br>Invasion of Sweyn.<br>Murder of Edmund Ironside.<br>(England under Danish Kings.)<br>Duncan becomes King of all Scotland.   | 980<br>1002<br>1009<br>1016<br>1034           |   |   |
| Ethelred the Unready, 978-1016.      | (English line of kings restored.)<br>Godwin exiled.<br>Battle of Stamford Bridge; Battle of Hastings; Norman Conquest.  | 1042<br>1061<br>1066                          | William Duke of Normandy.   | 1035                                      |
| Canute, 1016-35.                     |   |   |   |   |
| Edward the Confessor, 1042-66.       |   |   |   |   |
| Harold, 1066.                        |   |   |   |   |

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS ON PERIOD ONE

55 B.C.—A.D. 1066

- 1 Give a description of town life in Roman Britain. (NUJB 1935)
2. How far was Britain Romanized during the first four centuries A.D.? (LGS 1935)
3. By what means did the Romans secure their position in Britain? (B 1931)
4. Describe the condition of the country (a) at the time of the invasion by Julius Cæsar, and (b) at the end of the Roman occupation. (NUJB '31)
5. What part did the following play in the history of the Roman occupation of Britain: Caractacus, Boadicea, Agricola, Hadrian, the Count of the Saxon Shore? (OL 1925)
6. Why was the Synod of Whitby called, and why was the decision taken so important? (D 1931; OL 1926)
7. State the main facts concerning the establishment of Christianity in Saxon times. (NUJB 1936)
8. Describe the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain. (NUJB 1935)
9. Describe the effects in Anglo-Saxon England of the Danish invasions of the ninth century. (NUJB 1936)
10. Describe the life and work of Alfred. (LGS 1937)
11. Give an account of the aims and achievements of Wilfrid or Theodore of Tarsus. (LGS 1936)
12. How far was the conversion of England due to St. Augustine of Canterbury? (LGS 1937)
13. Give an account of the career and character of Canute. (LGS 1936)
14. What does England owe either to King Alfred or to St. Dunstan? (D 1931)
15. "Dunstan is the most important figure between Alfred and the Norman Conquest." Discuss this statement. (LGS 1932)
16. Give an account of the reign of Edward the Confessor (NUJB '31)

PERIOD TWO  
THE GROWTH OF THE NATION  
1066-1216

CHAPTER 8  
ENGLAND UNDER FOREIGN KINGS

1. THE NORMANS AS FOREIGN KINGS

The reigns of the first four Norman kings have a peculiarity common to them all, and yet possessed by no reign which follows. Each of the four kings has the character of a *foreigner* ruling by right of conquest over a conquered people. The kings were Norman, and the people Saxon; Saxon subjects held down by Norman conquerors. It is true that Saxon revolts were not quite so common as might be expected, but the Saxons learnt that to rebel was hopeless. In addition, they speedily found that, hard master as the king was, the Norman baron was worse, and so they supported the Crown against the "petty tyrant". Yet it was a sullen support, given from self-interest, with no motive of loyalty or affection about it. Kings and barons alike were hateful to them as foreigners: they submitted to the rule of a foreign king as being better than that of foreign barons. But their real desire was to be rid of them all.

England  
under  
foreign  
kings

Supported  
by English  
through  
fear of the  
barons

By the time Henry II's reign was reached this feeling of antagonism was dwindling. Henry II was no longer regarded as a foreign king; the division between conquerors and conquered was growing less sharp; even the barons were taking a more national character. We shall have to dwell more upon this; for the present it is enough to draw

a mental line of division between Stephen and Henry II. On one side of it are Norman kings, on the other English kings.

Remembering, then, that we have to deal with kings who were foreigners, we must see:

1. What the Norman Conquest meant for England, and how William I established and kept up his power; how also his sons continued his policy; and

2. What happened when the king, instead of being strong like William I and Rufus and Henry I, was weak.

In tracing these events we shall see the Feudal System at its best, and also at its worst.

## 2. THE MILITARY CONQUEST

The victory of Hastings laid the south and east of England at William's feet, but it did not touch the north and west. Edwin and Morcar's forces were still dangerous. William's conduct, indeed, shows that he did not expect the country of Alfred and Edmund Ironside to submit after one defeat only. But the English were still quarrelling among themselves; so, though the Witan chose *Edgar Atheling*, the grandson of Edmund Ironside, to succeed Harold as king, yet in a short time they found it hopeless to resist further. William, indeed, was anxious for them to submit of their own free will. He had moved cautiously towards London, and had burned Southwark; but then, instead of besieging London, he had crossed the Thames and moved his army to Berkhamstead. Thither an embassy came to William with the Atheling himself at the head of it, and offered him the crown. Thus he was able to say that he ruled not as conqueror, but as the lawful king of England elected by the Witan. Canute, and even Alfred, his two greatest predecessors, had owed their crown to the same title. By the famous *Oath of Salisbury* in 1086 (see p. 86), he made "all the landowning men of property all over

English  
disunion  
and sub-  
mission

William  
offered  
the Crown  
of Eng-  
land

England " swear fealty to him, and this was recognition of his Kingship.

Being able to say he was lawful king was a great advantage, but William was still in an extremely difficult position. He had two things to do: the first, to subdue the English thoroughly; the second, to keep his own Norman followers contented and obedient, to reward them, and yet not make them so strong that they could revolt against him. He had, in fact, to keep himself master of both Normans and English.

William's  
difficul-  
ties

His first stroke was to declare that all those who had fought against him at Hastings were rebels, fighting against their lawful king, and that their estates were forfeited to him. Thus he became master of almost all the land in the south of England. It was not long before he got hold of the rest. In 1067, when the Conqueror had gone back to the Continent, leaving his brother, Odo of Bayeux, as Justiciar, to rule the country, rebellions burst out everywhere. In the south-west, in Mercia, in Northumbria, there were English risings. Luckily for William there was no union among the English rebels. Each district took as its leader a descendant of its own earl; each fought for itself and each was consequently crushed by itself. William returned, subdued the west, took Exeter, harried Gloucester and Worcester, and drove the English leaders to take refuge in Ireland and Wales. In the north he had sterner work to do. The rebels were headed by *Waltheof, Earl of Huntingdon*, and helped by the King of Scotland, who had married Margaret, sister of Edgar Atheling. A force of Danes under *King Sweyn*, who had hopes of recovering Canute's kingdom for himself, also took the field with them. At first they were successful. Durham and York fell into their hands. But the allies began to quarrel, and William, marching north, found them an easy prey. The Danes drew off in their ships, plundering Peterborough on their way. Waltheof had to submit; and to punish the rebels, and guard against another rising, William harried the Vale of York. From

Forfeiture  
of estates  
to the  
king

English  
risings  
(1067)

Waltheof  
(1069)  
and the  
Danes

Harrying  
of the  
North

the Humber to the Tees everything that could be burnt was burnt. The people were slain, driven out, or left to die of starvation. Nearly twenty years after, the *Domesday Survey* echoes the same story of one estate after another—"Waste".

Hereward  
(1070-72)

This harrying of the north showed that William would be ruthless in suppressing rebellion. He still had further resistance to meet, however. Amid the eastern fens, in the Isle of Ely, surrounded by marshes, *Hereward*, "the Last of the English", still resisted. He had come there from Peterborough, when the Danes left, and he was joined by the last of William's enemies, among them Morcar and the Bishop of Durham. For a year he held out. The monks of Ely are said to have betrayed the way into his camp, but when Morcar and his friends surrendered, Hereward with a few followers fought his way out and escaped. Morcar and the rest were treated as rebels. The King of Scotland, too, was forced to yield and to acknowledge William as his lord, just as his ancestors had acknowledged Edward the Elder and Canute.

These useless risings completed the work that Hastings had begun. Each rebellion was followed by fresh confiscations of land, and the land was used to reward Norman followers. Even in the cases where an Englishman was not turned out from his estates, he was obliged to pay a fine and to admit that the land was really the king's and not his own; that he was the king's tenant and vassal and therefore bound to serve him. (*Note 9.*)

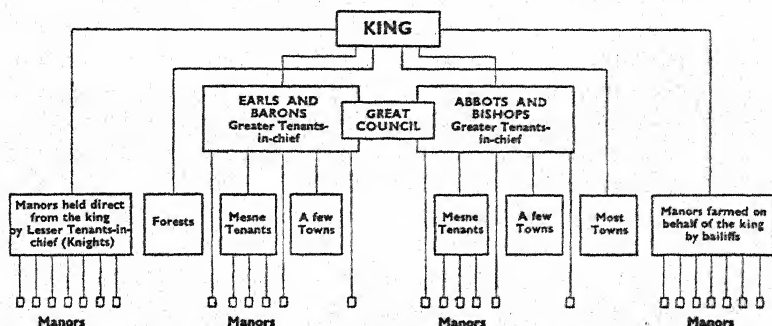
### 3. THE FEUDAL SYSTEM

This made more definite what is called the Feudal System.

The  
Feudal  
System:  
Land  
Tenure  
the basis

It is not true to say that this was altogether introduced by the Norman kings, for the essence of the feudal system, the idea that because a man had land, therefore he had certain rights and owed certain duties, had existed in Saxon times. In Edgar's day it had been ordained that every

“ landless man should have a lord ”, and “ *commendation* ”, that is to say, the practice of a man’s placing himself under the protection of a more powerful neighbour, was also common enough in Saxon England. But the Normans drew closer the tie between the man and his land.



## NORMAN FEUDALISM AS ADOPTED IN ENGLAND

William strengthened a tendency already existed, and he developed more sharply the whole "feudal system". The holding of land became the basis of everything. The king at the head was the owner of all the land. He granted large estates to his nobles and barons, who were called *tenants-in-chief*, and who were bound by these grants of land to fight for the king if he called on them to do so. The *tenants-in-chief* in their turn granted parts of their estates to their followers, who were then called *mesne-tenants*<sup>1</sup> and were bound in their turn to obey the *tenants-in-chief* as superiors. *Mesne-tenants* might, if they pleased, regrant parts of their estates. And below all these classes of *free* tenants were vast numbers of "unfree" (*villeins*).

We may think of it as a sort of pyramid:<sup>2</sup> villeins at the bottom; above them free tenants; minor tenants owing

<sup>1</sup> i.e. intermediate tenants.

<sup>2</sup> See diagram on this page. But this only gives the simple outline of what was really far more complicated.



obedience to other greater men; at the top the tenants-in-chief holding direct from the king; the king as the apex; land, being the bond which united them and in the main settled their rights and duties. But we must not picture it as more orderly than it was. In simplest idea it was regular; in practice and working it was intolerably confused and disorderly. There were many forms of tenancy, and men owed all sorts of duties to many different persons: for example, the same man might hold some land from the king, some from the church, and some from a baron. (*Note 10.*)

It is easy to see that the English came off badly in this arrangement. As the Norman friends of the king were put at the top, the English naturally sank to the bottom.

#### 4. THE MANORIAL SYSTEM

After the conquest most of the country was parcelled out into "manors" and the *Norman manor* is most interesting to study. Domesday Book shows us that manors had existed "in the time of King Edward", but under William changes took place and the system was tightened up. The manorial estate was divided into two groups, the lord's *domain* and the peasant's holdings. The land was classed as arable (plough-land), meadow, and "waste". The arable, in many parts of England, was cultivated on the *three-field system*,<sup>1</sup> that is, it was divided into three; one part in rotation was sown with wheat, one with barley, and the third was fallow, that is, left uncultivated, so as to give the land a rest after two years of growing crops. In these great arable fields the holdings were arranged in strips (usually an acre, or subdivisions of an acre) separated from each other by *balks* or ridges of turf. Here every man in the village had his holding, made up of different numbers of strips, scattered about all over the great field. The better-off had more strips than the

"Three-fields"

<sup>1</sup> But it is difficult to generalize for the whole of England. In a large part, for instance, the land was cultivated on the two-field system, the land providing corn one year and lying fallow the next.

poorer, and in early times every man had his strips re-allotted each year. Later this was given up.

The meadow was divided in the same way, and in this case the custom continued of an annual redivision.<sup>1</sup> Here the hay was grown. There were no hedges or walls on either arable land or meadow, and when harvest and hay-making was over, the fields were thrown open and the cattle turned in to graze. This lack of divisions has caused the system sometimes to be called the "open-field" system.

The  
"open-  
field"  
system

The *waste* lay beyond arable land and meadow, and was rough common land, where the villagers could turn out their geese and, if there were woodland, their pigs, and where they could get furze and wood for fuel. It was specially useful to the poorest class, the cottars.

Waste

The arrangements of the holdings in the great fields in scattered strips, and their re-allotment each year, was clearly not a very convenient one, for a man would have to go from one of his strips to another, and if one peasant were slack, and cultivated his holding badly, the neighbouring strips would suffer, from weeds for example. But we can see in the system a proof that the manor dates back to a time when there was no lord, but when all the peasants were members of a free village community. For if all were free, and all wished to share the land, then this method ensured fairness and equality.

Scattered  
strips

Ploughing was done by oxen in teams of four, six, or eight, and villagers often combined in the ownership of a plough and a team, for many could not own one themselves. Corn had to be ground in the lord's mill, which meant paying the lord a fee, and tenants had to take their disputes to the lord's court. The manorial court indeed gave justice as between the tenants, and also between the lord and the tenants, and was extremely profitable to the lord, for the

Justice

<sup>1</sup> This annual redivision continued till well into the nineteenth century. In most cases it was done by lot; for instance, small pieces of stick were drawn out of a pocket, as in Sussex, or a number of apples with distinctive marks on them were drawn out of a hat by a boy, as in Somerset.

punishments were as a rule fines. The "justice" given there depended on the custom of the manor, and this gave the villein some protection.

Under the Normans each manor had its lord, and the  
**Classes on the manor** peasants held their land from him. Some were "freemen"; that is to say, they could leave their holdings and move elsewhere, they had legal rights against the lord of the manor, and, though they might in some cases perform work on the lord's domain, this was usually seasonal work such as ploughing. The majority were "villeins"; that is to say, they held their land in return for performing services to the lord, and they were "bound to the soil"—they could not leave their holding and go elsewhere. On the other hand, the lord of the manor could not take away a villein's land.

The lord's land or domain, was sometimes in a compact block, sometimes scattered about amongst the peasant's holdings. The villeins had to cultivate the lord's domain, and they did this either by *week-work*, so many days per week, or *boon-work*, that is, work at special times such as corn or hay harvest and ploughing.<sup>1</sup> They might also pay rent in kind by giving fowls, or eggs, or a pig to the lord. Usually the villein had thirty acres, scattered about in strips, and he might own a plough and some oxen. Below the villein in prosperity came the "bordars" or "cottars", who had much smaller holdings, one or two acres, and who had no oxen or ploughs. Another set of men (usually found in parts of the country where the Danes had been) were the *socmen*, who held their land on condition that they used the lord's court to obtain justice (*soc*), and these socmen could leave their holdings with the lord's consent. They were practically "free men".

Clearly the lord would have to employ people to super-  
**Officials of the manor** vise the work of the manor, and so we find a little set of men who are the officials in each manor. A great land-owner, with many manors, would employ a *seneschal* or

<sup>1</sup> Free tenants often performed "boon-work", but not "week-work".

steward to go round them all. Each manor would have a *bailiff*, to see that the tenants did their work on the domain properly. A *reeve* was elected by the tenants to keep account of the performance of each man's duty work, and a *hayward* would supervise not only the haymaking, but also the corn harvest. The lord or the steward or some senior official of the lord presided over the manorial court.

All this organization existed in many places before the conquest, but the Normans made the system almost universal. In addition, at first many who had been "free" sank into villeinage while villeins, becoming poorer, might sink to be cottars. The Norman lawyers did not always observe the difference between "free" and "unfree", and so men who were really "free", but who for various reasons had performed agricultural services, were classed as unfree. Effect  
of the  
conquest

## 5. WILLIAM I'S SETTLEMENT OF ENGLAND

In this way the Feudal System, as established by King William, bore hard on the English. We shall see that they became worse off when a weak king was substituted for a strong one. William might rule sternly, but he ruled all alike. By his gifts of land he had bound to him a body of armed followers who could defend him against any attempts of the English to drive him out. Yet he did not mean to let this armed force be used against him. He himself had been a feudal vassal before he became a feudal king. As Duke of Normandy he had been so strong in his own dominions that he could disregard his superior, the King of France, as he liked. He had even met him in battle, and had overthrown him. He did not intend to let his barons be as troublesome to him as he had been to the King of France. So he did three wise things, and, by doing so, set up a different kind of Feudalism from that which later proved such a curse to both France and Germany.

First, he gave his barons much land, but it was usually

Barons' estates scattered in scattered estates, not all together. There were indeed three exceptions: he made great earldoms in Durham, Kent, and Chester. But the earldom of Durham was given to the Bishop of Durham, who, being a Churchman, could leave no heir to inherit it; and the earldom of Kent he placed in the hands of his half-brother, Odo of Bayeux, who was also a Churchman. The earldom of Chester alone went to a layman, but no doubt William expected that his hands would be kept full enough by the need of guarding the border against the Welsh. These "palatine" earldoms were, however, the exception.<sup>1</sup> As a rule estates were widely divided, with the result that, if a baron intended to rebel against the king, he could not collect his forces in one place; and he had always jealous neighbours round him who kept a watch on what he did. This division of estates was probably not a deliberate precautionary measure. It was caused by the gradual nature of William's conquest of England; the great knights got grants of land in each piece of new territory conquered. But though estates were scattered,

Revolt of  
the  
Norman  
earls  
(1074)

William was not saved from rebellions among his barons. In 1074 *Ralf, Earl of Norfolk*, and *Roger, Earl of Hereford*, plotted a rising while the King was away in Normandy, and invited *Waltheof, Earl of Huntingdon*, the only one of the old English nobles who had retained any great amount of power, to join them. Waltheof hesitated, for he already had rebelled in 1067 and been crushed; at first he agreed, then he drew back, and let Archbishop Lanfranc know what was going on. William was too strong and too quick for the rebels. Ralf was driven oversea, and Roger imprisoned for life, but the harshest measure fell on Waltheof, who was beheaded, since a second revolt forfeited his claim to mercy. His earldom passed, with the hand of his daughter, to David, King of Scotland, and became the source of much dispute in afterdays. In 1079 William had again to struggle with a

<sup>1</sup> These three earldoms were commonly called "palatine" from the fact that their holders had certain rights, such as the one of pardoning treason and murder, equal to the rights of the king in his palace (*palatium*).

rebellious feudal lord; this time his own son, *Robert*. The two met in battle at Gerberoi, not recognizing each other, and Robert's lance bore his father from his horse and wounded him. Shocked at his narrow escape from the crime of killing his father, Robert sought and received pardon, but William never trusted him again. Three years later *Odo of Bayeux* angered William by raising a private army to make war in Italy on his own account, and, though Odo was his half-brother and a bishop, William shut him in prison for the rest of his life.

Robert's  
rebellion  
(1079)

These troubles made William see that if he was to keep his barons in order he must do more than merely scatter their estates. Accordingly, in 1085, after "very deep speech with his Witan", he took his second great step to make his power secure; he caused a great Survey to be made in which was set down all the land of England, who held it, what it was worth in money dues; so that he might know exactly what was due to him, and so that no one might dispute over it. The results of this survey were set down in the *Domesday Book*.

Domesday  
survey

This was really a register drawn up with the idea of seeing how the land should be taxed — a book of rates, for assessment. Two things are especially remarkable in it. It is extraordinarily thorough and minute. It tells not only the name of the holder, and from whom it was held; not only the number of villeins and servile tenants on each estate, but it even records the ploughs, oxen, horses, sheep, pigs, mills, and fishponds. William wanted to find out all about his kingdom, especially in order to secure for himself a steady supply of money. And, secondly, though *Domesday* is more than eight hundred years old, it illustrates the amazing permanence and continuity of our rural history. Many an obscure hamlet of to-day has its name set down in *Domesday*. The names are often somewhat changed, but that is all. The divisions of the countryside stand now as they stood in the Conqueror's reign.



The  
Oath of  
Salisbury  
(1086)

William followed up the survey by his third great measure. He summoned the free tenants of the land "that were worth aught" to a great "gemot" at Salisbury. We have no knowledge of how many came, but those that did come were made to swear allegiance to the king "that they would be faithful to him against all other men". This *Oath of Salisbury* emphasized the fact that in the king's eyes at any rate it was the duty of every mesne-tenant to obey the king first and his feudal superior after. This policy of the king's helped to clip the wings of the great feudal nobles. On the Continent they could often defy the crown by bringing their vassals into the field. The king had no hold over the vassals, save through the feudal lord, and if the feudal lord were a rebel, he had no hold at all. But in England the nobles tended to become less dangerous; they could not make sure of their vassals' support. Here is the real difference between English and Continental feudalism.

Death of  
William  
(1087)

William did not live to reap the full benefit of these measures. In 1087 he went to war with the King of France. While his men were sacking and burning the town of Mantes, his horse, struck by a falling beam, reared and threw him hard against the pommel of his saddle. From this hurt he never recovered, dying a few weeks after at Rouen.

His  
character  
and  
strength

William was a hard man, who was never held back by any ideas of mercy when he thought it needful to be stern. The harrying of Yorkshire, the laying waste of the New Forest to make himself a hunting park, the imprisonment of Odo, the execution of Waltheof, all show him ruthless, at times even cruel. Yet his strong government, rule of a foreign conqueror though it was, had one great merit that counterbalances all his harshness. He united the kingdom under his own firm sway. Under Edward the Confessor and Harold the power of the Crown had dwindled, while that of the great earls had grown. This tendency to disunion and lawlessness William crushed.

And there is another side to the Norman Conquest which



must not be omitted. Had the Saxons been strong and vigorous and united, they would probably have flung off the Normans. Their failure goes to show that the Saxon character had declined, or at any rate was lacking in some of the great qualities that make a nation. The invasion of the Normans, the rule of a conquering race, and the eventual fusion of Norman and Saxon blood made, out of much adversity, the "Englishman" who proved himself stiffer material than his Saxon forefathers.

#### 6. WILLIAM RUFUS AND HENRY I

We may pass over the reigns of William Rufus and Henry I somewhat briefly. One important class of events which we have neglected in William I's reign we will continue to set on one side; that is, the dealings of these kings with the Church. Church affairs are best treated as a whole, leading up to the great quarrel between Henry II and Becket. Apart from these, neither William II nor Henry I calls up anything very striking. Both kings continued the policy of their father. Both had troubles with rebellious barons, and succeeded in overcoming them; both were at least as much interested in affairs in Normandy as in England.

The Conqueror left the duchy of Normandy to his eldest son, Robert, and gave England to his second son, William. Here was a ready ground for quarrel, since Robert had expected to succeed his father in both countries. As many of the barons held lands both in Normandy and England, they owed allegiance to both William and Robert; when war broke out they would have to make a choice which they would obey; and as Robert was easy-going and good-natured, while William soon showed himself to be as stern as his father, and was especially vigorous in exacting money in every way he could, a large number of barons took Robert's side. They were especially angered by what they regarded as the exactions of *Ranulf Flambard*, the

William  
Rufus  
(1087-  
1100)

**Ranulf  
Flambard** king's Justiciar, that is to say, the officer who represented the king when he was absent from the kingdom. Ranulf, who was also Bishop of Durham, was careful to enforce the full payment of all the dues which belonged to the king under the feudal system; and the most profitable of these dues came when an estate passed to a minor or an heiress. Flambard used to seize for the king all the profits of the estate till the minor came of age or the heiress married; he scrupulously collected the fines or payments due on coming into an estate. These exactions were legal enough,<sup>1</sup> but Flambard's activity made them very burdensome. He made the king, it was said, "every man's heir". Thus, to guard against his discontented barons, and to help him against his brother, William was forced to make friends with his English subjects. Foreigner and Norman though he was, he had to rely on what he called his "brave and honourable English". (*Note 11.*)

**Rebellion  
(1088)** With their help he triumphed over his enemies. Odo of Bayeux, Roger Montgomery, Robert of Bellême his son, Roger Mowbray, all rose against him, stirred up by Robert of Normandy. William defeated them all. He beat back a Welsh invasion, and by promising to his barons any land they might conquer from the Welsh, he encouraged a set of warlike adventurers who would keep his frontier safe. He settled Englishmen in Cumberland, the people of which were still mainly British, and as a precaution against Scottish raids he fortified Carlisle. The King of Scots, invading Northumberland out of revenge, was surprised and slain at *Alnwick*. William even turned the tables on his brother Robert, by leading an army in Normandy. The quarrel between the brothers was patched up for the time. Duke Robert soon after fell in with the fashion of his time and made up his mind to join the Crusades. To find money to equip himself and his followers, he pledged his duchy to William for 10,000 merks, without reflecting that he was

**Pledging  
of Nor-  
mandy**

<sup>1</sup> Save in the case of the Church (see p. 111).

not at all likely to be able either to repay the money, or to eject his brother from the duchy.

While Robert was in Palestine, William Rufus died, killed by an accident, or, as some said, murdered, while hunting in the New Forest. His death gave to *Henry*, the youngest and most capable of the Conqueror's sons, the unexpected chance of making himself both King of England and Duke of Normandy. England fell into his hands without much difficulty; but it was certain that when Robert came back he would have to fight hard, at any rate in Normandy, and probably in England also. Thus he, too, like Rufus, was led to trust much to his English subjects, and he did his best to win their support by marrying *Matilda*, sister of the King of Scots, who was heiress of the old line of Alfred.<sup>1</sup> Matilda was the daughter of Margaret, saint and Queen of Scotland. She was the last descendant in the direct line from the Saxon Kings of England.

Henry I  
(1100-  
1135)

Marriage  
with  
Matilda

Henry also imprisoned Rufus's Justiciar, Ranulf Flambard, recalled *Anselm*, Archbishop of Canterbury, from the exile into which Rufus had driven him, and issued a Charter of Liberties, in which he promised that the "aids" taken from his feudal tenants (such as *heriots* taken from a dead man's estate, and *reliefs* paid by an heir) should be strictly according to right, and further, that he would keep all the laws of Edward the Confessor's day.

At this point, Robert returned, and, at the invitation of some of Henry's barons, landed with an army in England. Henry had to buy him off by a promise of a pension, and the surrender of Normandy. This peace, however, turned out shortlived. Robert of Bellême rebelled against Henry, and managed to get Robert of Normandy to take his side. Henceforth, from 1104 onwards, there was no peace between the brothers. In 1106 Henry defeated Robert at *Tinchebrai*

Robert's  
invasion

<sup>1</sup> Thus through her our present kings trace their descent back beyond Alfred. As rulers, from Egbert to George VI, there is only a very brief gap in the blood line. The kings who do not come in are Canute, Hardicanute, Harold, William I, William II, Henry I (save by marriage), and Stephen.

and took him prisoner. Robert never saw liberty again. He was held captive till his death at Cardiff. Normandy passed into Henry's hands. Robert had left a son, William Clito, who remained to trouble Henry till 1128, when he died.

Disturbed as Normandy was, England enjoyed under Henry I a rest from insurrection and war for more than thirty years. Henry used this time to strengthen the royal power against the barons. He diminished the power of the feudal lords, and curtailed the "manorial" courts where the lord, or the lord's steward, presided. He encouraged the Shire and Hundred Courts, where justice was administered not by one man but by a body of free-tenants; and over the Shire Court presided the Sheriff, who was a royal officer of very wide power. Thus instead of a multitude of feudal jurisdictions, often very diverse and uncertain, and always oppressive, Henry began to substitute royal justice, which would be the same for all, in every place. (*Note 12.*)

Further, since most offences were punishable by fines, justice and revenue were closely connected, and Henry I, though less oppressive in his taxation than Rufus, was quite as much alive to the advantage of a plentiful supply of money. He began his reign with the thoroughly practical step of seizing the Treasury at Winchester, and, from that time onward, never loosed his hold over it. He found in Bishop Roger of Salisbury an official who organized his exchequer thoroughly, and he made its power felt by sending "barons of the exchequer" on circuit through the country, thus bringing out-of-the-way districts into connection with royal taxation, just as the Sheriffs made them familiar with royal justice.

How closely justice and revenue were connected with each other, and also with policy, is brought home to us by the King's Council. In its widest sense the *Magnum Consilium* or *Curia Regis* as it is called included much the same persons as the old Saxon Witan, though with a different qualification. The Witan had been the assembly of the

"Wise", and included church dignitaries, officials, and chief landholders. So did the King's Council, but for another reason. To it came all the king's tenants-in-chief; and since archbishops, bishops, abbots, officials of the court, and barons were of course tenants-in-chief, we find them all in the Council just as they met in the Witan. The qualification, however, was no longer "wisdom", but the holding of land direct from the king.

But, of course, as a rule not a very large number would attend the meetings of the King's Council. For ordinary business it tended to consist of the great officials such as the *Justiciar*, who acted as regent in the king's absence, the *Chancellor*, who was his secretary, the *Chamberlain* at the head of his household, the *Marshal*, and the *Constable*, who looked after his soldiers. Yet it is a peculiarly confusing body, for it engaged in so many duties under so many names. It was a council of state; it was a law court;<sup>1</sup> it collected and accounted for the revenue.<sup>2</sup> It has been aptly called a royal "court-of-all-work".

Ordinary  
business  
of the  
Council

The explanation of this many-sidedness is found by looking at the office of king. At one time the king was head of his tribe in everything. He ruled his people, and led them in war; he was their judge and lawgiver. (David, and the kings of the Iliad, are of this type.) But from very early times there was a council to help the king, and this council eventually came to wield many of the powers that were formerly the king's. Again, in course of time the work which proved too much for one man proved too much for one Council, and we get a multitude of councils and officials, each restricted to one branch; one manages justice, another revenue; a third makes laws; others attend to the army and to the navy. All are really subdivisions of the old royal authority. The king remains as the head but his powers

Delegation  
of  
royal  
power

<sup>1</sup> From this side of its activity has descended our Court of King's Bench and the term King's Counsel (K.C.).

<sup>2</sup> And was then called the Court of Exchequer. The term "Court" shows how finance and justice were entangled.

have been split up. We see this process at work in Henry I's reign, but not in it alone. It pervades English history; it is indeed a branch of history by itself: it is *constitutional* history.

Henry had shut his brother in prison and had seen his nephew slain; he had tamed his Norman barons; he had made friends with the English; his name was feared over the length and breadth of the land; he had punished ill-doers with such sternness that he had gained the nickname of the "Lion of Justice"; yet with all this, his last days were filled with anxiety. His son had perished in the wreck of the "White Ship" off the Channel Islands. A daughter, *Maud*, was his only heir. Henry tried to secure her succession to the throne; he had made his barons swear fealty to her. But it needed little penetration to see that they would not be likely to keep their oaths, for the idea of a woman on the throne was then strange and unknown.

Failure of  
Henry's  
work  
owing to  
lack of a  
son

## CHAPTER

### FEUDALISM AT ITS WORST: THE "NINETEEN LONG WINTERS"

STEPHEN (1135-1154)

When Henry I died, his plans for his daughter came to nothing. *Maud* was neither popular nor wise. She had married a foreigner, Geoffrey of Anjou, who was hated by the barons. Besides, no one then dreamed that a woman could be fit to rule the country. Consequently the barons, assembled in Great Council, set on the throne *Stephen*, Count of Blois.

Stephen was the son of Adela, William I's daughter. As a grandson of the Conqueror, he had a sound enough title to the throne. He was also, the chronicler tells us, a "mild



man and a good ", so there was hope that he would be a tolerable king. His share of goodness did not turn out to be very large, but his mildness, in other words his weakness, was undeniable. And the throne was at this time no place for a mild man.

Consequently, Stephen's reign was purely disastrous. It was one long struggle for power. First, *David of Scotland* burst over the border, nominally as Maud's ally. He was defeated at the *Battle of the Standard*, in which the barons and yeomen of Yorkshire, standing fast round a chariot on which floated the banners of St. Peter of York, St. Wilfred of Ripon, and St. John of Beverley, beat off the Scottish charges. But while the Scots were routed in the north, Maud's half-brother, Robert of Gloucester, rebelled in the west, and Stephen had to buy off David of Scotland by granting Northumberland and Cumberland to his son Prince Henry. David gave up Maud's cause and went home.

Battle  
of the  
Standard  
(1138)

So far Stephen had the support of the Church, since his brother, Henry, was Bishop of Winchester and firm on his side. He soon managed to lose this support. He demanded that the Bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln should hand over their castles to him. When they refused, he cast them into prison. This was certain to set the Church against him: but, more than that, it lost him the favour of the great officials; for this Bishop of Salisbury was that same Roger who had served Henry I so faithfully at the Exchequer, and the Bishop of Lincoln was his nephew. To quarrel with such men was sheer folly. Stephen's power slipped speedily away. He moved to capture the castle of Lincoln, which had been surprised by Ralf, Earl of Chester. Ralf, leaving his wife to defend the castle, gathered forces in his earldom, and, uniting with Robert of Gloucester, fell on Stephen's besieging army at Lincoln. A terrible conflict followed. Stephen showed that though he was a feeble king, he was a sturdy warrior. He met the Earl of Chester in fight, and,

Quarrel  
with the  
Church

Battle of  
Lincoln



had his battle-axe not broken on the earl's helmet, might have overthrown him. As it was, his men gave way, and he was himself taken prisoner.

Maud thus became "Lady of England", but she soon proved equally unfit to rule. Haughty and wilful, without gratitude to those who had put her on the throne, she could not understand that the same people could put her off again. She, too, quarrelled with the churchmen. She was obliged to set Stephen at liberty in exchange for Robert of Gloucester, a prisoner in the hands of the other side. Soon she tasted the bitterness of defeat. She was besieged in Oxford, and only escaped by being let down at night from the walls of the castle by a rope, crossing the Thames on the ice, and fleeing across the snow. Then she gathered forces and fought again.

Escape of  
Empress  
Maud

Yet battles and adventures are but a part of our concern. The misfortunes of war lie heaviest upon the people. So it was in Stephen's reign. The chronicler rightly styled it "the nineteen long winters of our discontent". In fact, the war went on because the barons did not wish to end it. Selfish, ambitious, merciless, unscrupulous, each baron made himself strong in his castle, and hoped to add to his possessions by violence or treachery. Geoffrey, Earl of Essex, for instance, took his title from both parties and pillaged both. Each baron in his petty realm reigned like a tyrant, striking his own coin, declaring his own justice, oppressing the wretched people by making them work at the castles with which they filled the land. An English monk who lived at Peterborough — one of the districts which suffered worst from the tyranny of the Earl of Essex and others like him — gives a vivid description of what part of England was like. The barons "put men in prison for their gold and silver. They hanged men up by the feet and smoked them with foul smoke. Some were hanged up by their thumbs, others by the head, and burning things were hung on to their feet. They put knotted strings about their heads and writhed them till

Years of  
misrule

they went into the brain. They put men into prisons where adders and snakes and toads were crawling, and so tormented them. Some they put into a chest, short and narrow and not deep, that had sharp stones within, and forced men therein so that they broke all their bones." When Stephen brought over foreigners from abroad to fight for him, these behaved even worse, sacking, burning, spoiling wherever they went. "Men said that Christ and his saints slept." The poor were reduced to misery; many of them whose huts had been burnt died of cold and hunger in the fields. Yet it would be an exaggeration to say that this picture is true of all England. And it is worth remarking that Stephen's reign saw in architecture the building of the naves of Norwich and Bury St. Edmunds, of the minster at Romsey, and of the hospital of St. Cross at Winchester, whilst in learning and literature Geoffrey of Monmouth produced his historical romances and Adelard of Bath was a student of Science and of Arabic.

Architec-  
ture in  
Britain

The rivalry between Stephen and Maud seemed likely to be continued between their children. Fortunately for England Stephen's only son died, and Stephen had no longer an interest in going on with the struggle. Once more, as so often in this reign, we have an example of the power of the churchmen; Archbishop Theobald managed to bring the two sides to terms. It was agreed by the *Treaty of Wallingford*, in 1153, that Stephen should be king for the rest of his life, but that Maud's son, Henry, should succeed him. Henry had not to wait long. In 1154 Stephen died. (Note 14.)

Treaty of  
Walling-  
ford be-  
tween  
Stephen  
and Maud  
(1153)

## CHAPTER 10

THE MAKING OF SCOTLAND: SCOTLAND  
AND THE NORMAN KINGS

In this chapter we have to notice: (1) how the various kingdoms in Scotland had come under one rule; (2) how the English language had spread in the country; and (3) in what way the kings of England had regarded it as a kingdom in some sense subject to themselves.

Four separate districts have gone to make up Scotland as it is now: the land of the *Picts*, which included all Scotland north of the Forth and Clyde, except Argyllshire; *Dalriada*, the kingdom of the Scots (originally an Irish people), in Argyllshire; the kingdom called *Strathclyde*, which stretched originally from the Clyde to the Ribble, inhabited by Britons — of this, however, only the northern part came into Scottish hands; and, last, the district called *Lothian*, inhabited by Angles. Lothian included the east coast from the Forth to the Tees; but here, as in the case of Strathclyde, the southern part has fallen to England.

The kingdom of the Scots and the northern part of the British kingdom seem, from fairly early times, to have been under the leadership of the Picts.

The way to complete union was prepared by *St. Columba*, who had landed in Iona in 563. The Scots, who had come from Ireland about sixty years before, were already Christian, and Columba converted the Picts, thus giving the two peoples a common faith. There was no permanent union, however, for many years, and, indeed, at one time it seemed as if the Angles would overrun the whole of North Britain. Their hopes were dashed in 685 when the Picts and Scots

defeated them at *Nectansmere*. Union actually began in 844 when *Kenneth MacAlpin*, King of the Scots, ascended the Pictish throne. There was probably some fighting, but

Kenneth had a legitimate claim through his mother (among the Picts inheritance through the mother was the rule),



SCOTLAND AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINTH CENTURY

and his success was made possible by the raids of the Northmen, which had weakened the power of the Picts. The united kingdom over which Kenneth ruled was called Alban.

(F 938)

5

There were now in Scotland three kingdoms — Alban, Strathclyde, and Lothian. The kings of Alban made several attempts to conquer Strathclyde and Lothian, but at first without lasting success. During the reign of Indulph (945-962) Dunedin or Edinburgh was abandoned by the Angles and came into the permanent possession of the Scots. This made them masters of the territory between the Forth and the Pentlands, which was the limit of their advance into Lothian till 1018.

Meantime the Northmen continued their raids and made settlements in the Hebrides, in the Orkney Islands, in Caithness, and at various places all along the Scottish coast. Early in the tenth century these raids caused two curious alliances. First of all Constantine III, King of Alban, allied with the English against the Danes, and then, becoming alarmed at the growing power of the English, he formed an alliance with the Northmen and the British of Strathclyde against the English. In 937 he was defeated by Athelstan, King of the English, at Brunanburh (see p. 44).

The efforts of the kings of Alban to conquer Lothian continued, and at last Malcolm II, with the aid of the Strathclyde Britons, completely defeated the Angles at *Carham* in 1018, and annexed the country between the Forth and the Tweed. In the same year Duncan, a grandson of Malcolm, became king of Strathclyde, and when Malcolm died in 1034 he became first ruler of the kingdom of all Scotland.

Lothian, the last of the territories to be gained, was a rich and fertile land, and it was English in speech. We must now notice how English speech gradually spread from Lothian over all Scotland except the remoter parts of the Highlands.

We may trace the working of this process beginning in the fairly familiar reign of *Macbeth*. In its history, indeed, Shakespeare's play is quite misleading. Macbeth, who was Mormaer of Moray, did, in circumstances of which our

knowledge is incomplete, slay King Duncan and take the kingdom for himself. But his reign lasted seventeen years, and was by no means without glory. Also, he had a claim to the throne through his wife, who was a granddaughter of a former king, and possibly represented the elder line. He gained the support of his people, beat off a Northumbrian invasion, was generous to the Church, and perhaps even made a pilgrimage to Rome. But he was at last overcome by Malcolm, son of Duncan, who defeated and slew him at Lumphanan in Aberdeenshire in 1057.

*Malcolm III* (Canmore) had spent fourteen years in England, and he knew English speech as well as he did his own. He reigned in Scotland from 1057 to 1093, and saw England fall before the onset of the Normans. As the Norman power spread northwards, he felt his own throne to be in danger. He took up the Saxon cause, and to cement the alliance married *Margaret*, sister of Edgar Atheling, Saxon heir to the crown. Margaret was a very remarkable woman. The chroniclers admire her for being learned and pious, but she was also a keen politician. She had great influence over her husband, who followed her advice in many ways. She wished to see things done as she had seen them in England. Thus she persuaded the Scottish Church to abandon its own special customs in favour of those of the Roman Church, just as the English Church had done at the Synod of Whitby, four hundred years before, with the same result of bringing Scotland into a closer connection with the culture of Western Europe. In everything she did, and particularly by the introduction of English clergy, she helped to spread English customs and English speech. She thus became the head of the English party against the Celtic party.

Malcolm  
III (Can-  
more)  
(1057-93)

St. Mar-  
garet of  
Scotland

Naturally this was resented by the Celtic nobility, and after Malcolm's death, his brother *Donald Bane* drove out the English-speaking nobility and tried to return to the old ways. A struggle between Donald Bane and the sons of

Edgar  
and his  
Normans

Malcolm Canmore and Margaret followed, but finally Edgar the son of Malcolm was victorious. He obtained some Norman troops, and when the war was over these remained in Scotland, and a Norman element bringing Norman names was added to the population.

Edgar, who had no son, was succeeded on the throne by his brother Alexander I, and when he too died without children, the youngest brother, David, became King. All three brothers took a great part in reorganizing the Scottish church. Dioceses were created, and many monasteries founded and endowed. All three brothers, too, aimed at encouraging the spread of Norman feudalism in Scotland. They were aided in these efforts by the dynastic connection with England. Themselves the sons of Malcolm and the English Margaret, they were able to secure the ascendancy of the English-speaking part of Scotland over the Celtic. Their ties with the Norman kings of England were strengthened in other ways. Henry I in the year 1100 married the princess Matilda, a sister of King Edgar of Scotland. By this marriage it was hoped that the hostility between the kings of the two countries might be abated.

David I  
(1124-53)  
marries  
the Saxon  
Matilda

These hopes were not realized. When David I followed his brothers (Edgar and Alexander) on the throne of Scotland in 1124, he himself married an English wife, Matilda, daughter of Earl Waltheof of Northumbria.<sup>1</sup> This made him, in virtue of his wife, an English baron, and he thus concerned himself in the struggle which broke out between barons and crown on the death of Henry I.

Invasion of  
England:  
Battle of  
the  
Standard  
(1138)

In addition, the Empress Maud was his niece, and he took her part in the war against Stephen. He invaded England but was defeated, as we have seen, at the Battle of the Standard (1138). The territories which he obtained from Stephen as the price of peace (Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmorland) were not long retained. When

<sup>1</sup> By this marriage David held the Honour of Huntingdon, the Earldom of Northampton, and a claim to the Earldom of Northumberland.



Henry II became King of England he set out to repair the damage done by Stephen. He retook the four counties, and by a stroke of luck captured David's successor William the Lion (1165-1214) at Alnwick. William was compelled to make the Treaty of Falaise with Henry (1174), by which he did homage to the King of England for the whole of his Scottish Kingdom. This homage was performed more than once, William journeying to England for the purpose. The overlordship of the English crown would have been clear enough, but Richard I, when he needed money for his Crusade, sold the rights to homage back to William. (Note 15.)

Treaty of  
Falaise  
(1174)

Thus the whole relation between the two countries was in a tangle. The English kings had tried to make out some claim to be lords over the kings of Scotland. They could point to gifts of territory and to acts of homage. On the other hand, the kings of Scotland could say that these gifts really implied nothing; that the homage was for English earldoms which they held, and not for their Scottish dominions; and that if any homage was due for Scotland itself, Richard's bargain had cancelled it. Yet so far there was no national enmity between the two. They did not glory in being different races. They fought indeed at times, now one side winning, and now the other. Scotland had not yet begun to think of England as a tyrant, nor did England look on Scotland as a rebel. Indeed, for the great part of the thirteenth century the two kingdoms were at peace. Both Alexander II and Alexander III married English princesses; both were wise rulers who did much to unite Scotland and strengthen the royal power, without either attacking England or admitting the English supremacy. The more bitter feeling which becomes so marked in the next century was to spring from the doings of Edward I.

Peace  
between  
England  
and  
Scotland

## CHAPTER 11

## HENRY II (1154-1189) — HIS REFORMS

Henry II had got the title of king. His life's work was spent in making that kingship a reality. He strove to make himself supreme in his kingdom, and what he did includes a great success and a great failure. Over the barons he triumphed; the Church, on the other hand, worsted him. We have to deal in succession with these two struggles, and we may leave a third aspect of his greatness, his position as a Continental ruler, to lead on to the exploits of his warrior son, Richard Cœur de Lion.

To understand the reasons of his strength, it is necessary to look for a moment beyond England. His father, Geoffrey of Anjou, was one of a family that, like the Norman dukes, had been fertile in strong men, men who had united warlike daring with the ruthlessness and unscrupulousness by which a feudal vassal of the King of France could make himself as strong as his master.<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey had not been able to do very much in England, where even Maud's followers feared and disliked him. But he had reduced Normandy, and when he died, in 1151, he left Henry, then eighteen years of age, the ruler of *Normandy*, and Count of *Anjou*, *Maine*, and *Touraine*. The next year Henry married Eleanor, divorced wife of Louis VII, and thereby became Duke of *Aquitaine*, Count of *Poitou*, *Toulouse*, *Saintonge*, and *Limousin*, with a suzerainty over all the countries west of the Rhone. Thus he was, even before he became King of England, the mightiest uncrowned head in Europe. If we add that he was skilled in war, adroit in diplomacy, full of restless energy and fiery temper, never idle for a moment, knowing well how to use his own time and how to make

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Green has pointed out how typical their castle at Anjou is of the family. The castle (what remains of it) is a huge, hideous, black pile which seems to scowl down at the town.

The  
Angevin  
Empire —  
Henry's  
possession  
ions: Eng-  
land, Nor-  
mandy,  
Maine,  
Anjou,  
and Aquit-  
taine

others work for him, it is plain that the barons would find him widely different from the "mild and good" King Stephen. (*Note 16.*)

Henry's general policy was to undo all that Stephen had done. The first thing was to restore the royal revenue. Stephen had allowed two-thirds of it to dwindle away by quarrelling with the bishops and so upsetting the management of the exchequer, and by granting crown lands to his friends; and the little that Stephen had not spent Maud had scattered. Henry took back the crown lands, and restored Nigel, Bishop of Ely (Roger of Salisbury's nephew), to his familiar place in the exchequer. He stopped the practice of barons issuing their own coin, put out a good coinage of his own, and took stern measures with any who adulterated it. He pulled down many hundreds of those oppressive castles which the barons had built in defiance of the law. He recovered the royal castles which were in baronial hands. The country was still full of the hateful mercenaries who had made it their business to plunder both sides. These were expelled from the realm. Henry also forced Malcolm, King of Scots, to yield the northern counties of Cumberland, Westmorland, and Northumberland, which had been given to David; and Malcolm renewed his homage to Henry in respect of these territories.

Restoration of revenue and destruction of castles

Henry II and Scotland

The ease with which his restoration of order was carried out makes it clear that Henry had on his side the mass of the people of England. They had suffered under Stephen's folly and the barons' cruelty long enough to know that the best thing for all was a strong king. If only Henry were "strong and of a good courage" the land would have rest. And rest was what the land needed.

Henry and England

Henry was, however, far more than a domineering king, bent on having his own way. He was a statesman. He set himself not only to check misdeeds, but to prevent future misdoing. He sought precautions as well as remedies. His authority might be recovered by force, but it must be main-

Henry as statesman

tained by law. Thus, while he strengthened his army, he also took pains to strengthen his law courts.

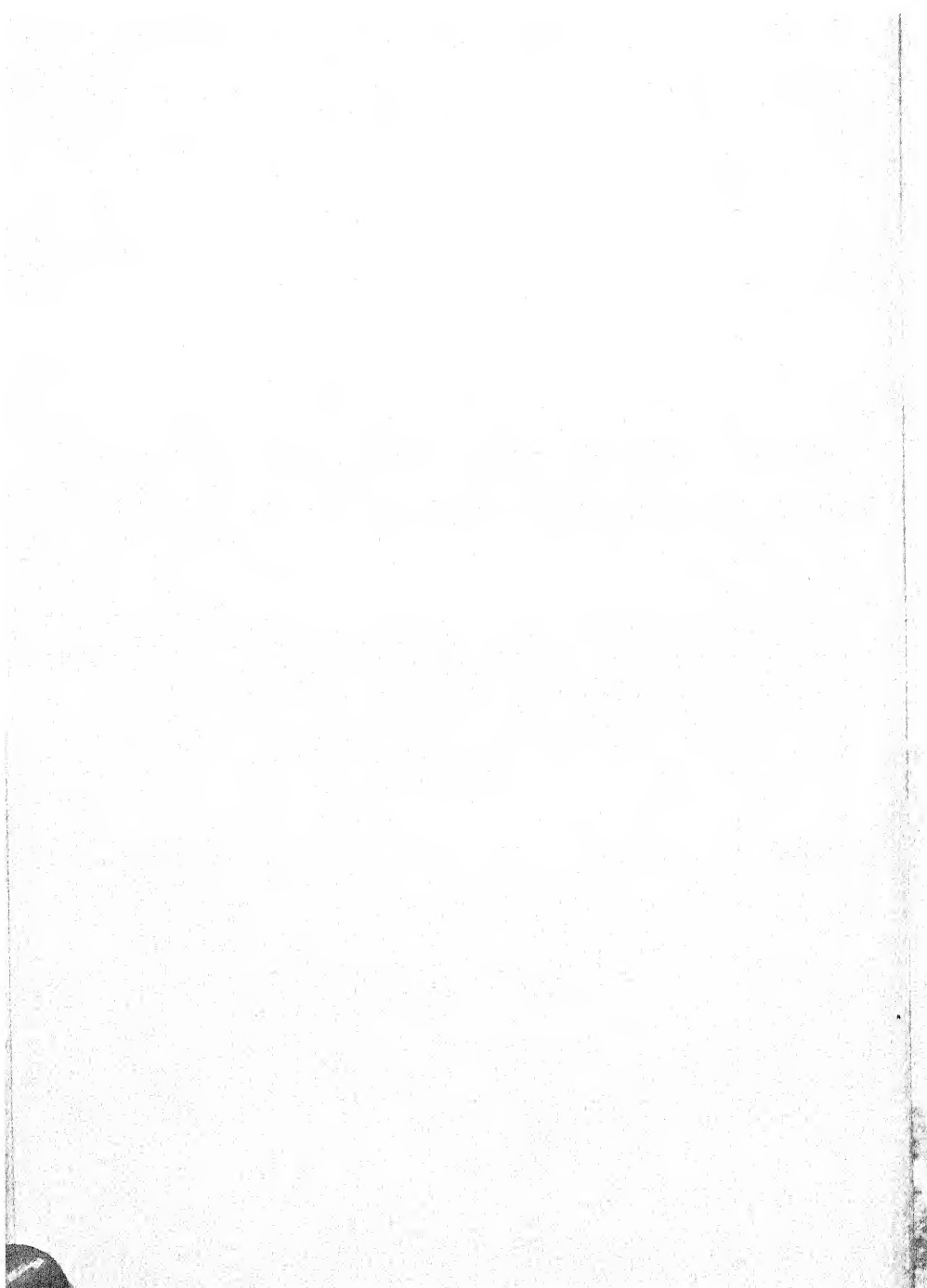
Hitherto the weakness of the feudal army had been two-fold. First, there was the danger of mutiny or neglect. If the king was weak, the baron would not come: or perhaps he came with only a part of his proper followers. But even when the king was, like Henry, strong enough to compel attendance, there was another fatal defect: the tenant was only bound to serve for forty days in the year. It was impossible to carry on a campaign, especially when sieges were long and tiresome, with soldiers who went home again after a little more than a month in the field. So Henry relied more on soldiers whom he paid to fight for him. He developed a plan, begun in his grandfather's time,

of taking a tax called *scutage*,<sup>1</sup> a payment imposed on each "knight's fee" — that is to say, the holding of land which would be liable to provide him with a knight and his proper attendants for service in war. Henry made use of this method when he was planning a distant expedition to Toulouse in 1159. Later on, his son Richard I enlarged the practice by permitting his barons to pay a fine instead of accompanying him in person, and with the money thus obtained he hired soldiers. In this way the king got a better army and the barons became weaker. Those who preferred to stay at home grew less warlike and their vassals less skilled in arms. If they were to rebel they would find the king with a disciplined force, while they themselves had only a band of ill-trained followers. "Scutage" did much to weaken feudalism in England.

The other of Henry's military measures falls at the end of his reign; but it deserves notice here as it too helped to weaken the warlike powers of the barons. By the *Assize of Arms*, in 1181, he revived the old Saxon army of the "fyrd", that national levy of all between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Since the Norman men-at-arms had ridden

<sup>1</sup> i.e. a "shield tax".





down the Saxon footmen at Hastings, the feudal army had been favoured and the "fyrd" used less frequently. It was the day of heavy cavalry: infantry was held of small account. None the less, the "fyrd" had been called out at times of pressing need, and had done good service both against the Scots, and against rebellious barons in 1173-74. The Assize of Arms laid down that every freeman was to possess certain weapons, and these were to be inspected at intervals to see that they were in good order. This force of freemen was the origin of our militia. Henceforth for service abroad the king tended to replace the feudal knights by trained mercenaries, and to defend England against the foreign invader or rebellious barons he relied partly on the militia. Thus the old feudal levy was less needed. Feudalism by slow degrees lost its military character, became less dangerous to the Crown, and eventually sank into a method of holding land.

Revival  
of the  
"fyrd"

Armed  
freemen  
at home

Mercen-  
aries  
abroad

One of the greatest marks of the disorder of Stephen's time had been the increase of *feudal jurisdictions*, the growth, that is to say, of barons' courts, in which the king's law was set aside by a baron's private regulations. In days when communication through the country was difficult and slow, there was always trouble in keeping the local courts connected with the central courts. It was to tighten this connection that *sheriffs* (royal officers) had been placed over the shire courts, while Henry I had sent round from the exchequer "travelling barons" who, first attending to matters of revenue, dealt also with matters of law. But while under King Stephen each did what was right in his own eyes, the connection between the central and local courts had almost perished. Henry II set himself to bring the local courts again under royal control. Unless the king's law ran through the length and breadth of the land, the king's power would be but a shadow.

Revival  
of royal  
justice

The  
sheriffs

The  
"travel-  
ling  
judges"

The illegal baronial courts could easily be destroyed by the hand that was strong enough to pull down the illegal



baronial castles. But something had to be put in their place: it is generally far easier to destroy than to construct. And the fact that Henry succeeded in his constructive measures does far more to prove him a great statesman than any of his purely destructive work.

Idea of  
represent-  
tatives hold of a Saxon institution and bent it to a new shape. As we have seen, Saxon justice had been accustomed to the idea of an association of men who *represented* their district, whether it was the shire or the hundred, either to give information on oath, or to do justice. Representatives of the "tunmoots" sat in the hundred courts; representatives of the hundred in the shire courts; *Domesday Book* itself had been based on the evidence collected from sworn representatives. And it was from this idea of representation that Henry developed the jury system.

Justices  
in eyre  
and jury  
of present-  
ment The first step was the revival of his grandfather's plan of sending judges from the king's court to the local courts. These justices *in eyre*<sup>1</sup> still combined a care for the revenue with the task of bringing the king's justice home to all. But an important step forward was taken by the

Assize of  
Claren-  
don  
(1166) *Assize of Clarendon* in 1166, when it was ordered that these justices were to be met in each county by "twelve legal men from each hundred, and four from each township", who were to "present" to them notorious malefactors or men suspected of crime. These persons did not indeed

Jury of  
"pre-  
sentment" try the accused: they formed a jury "of presentment" (the origin of what came to be called the "grand jury"), whose task it was to decide whether a man ought to be tried

Trial by  
ordeal for any offence. The real trial was by the ordeal of water,<sup>2</sup> and if the accused failed to get through that he was condemned. Yet even when he came off triumphant from the Ordeal he was to leave the country within forty days. If

<sup>1</sup> An abbreviation of *in itinere* (on circuit).

<sup>2</sup> The accused had to dip his hand into boiling water and take out a stone from the bottom of the vessel. The hand was then tied up for a time (usually seven days), and if, when the bandages were taken off, it was found to be clean, the man was held acquitted.

the case against him was so strong that the sworn men "presented" him for trial, it was considered that he was at any rate an undesirable person to keep in the country.

This use of a jury, as laid down in the Assize of Clarendon, and repeated in the Assize of Northampton (1176), Assize of Northampton (1176) applied only to criminal matters. But in civil cases too a jury might be employed, though only as an alternative. The other choice, however, was the Norman scheme of "trial by battle", and this was generally disliked, not only because it was un-English (for it was not a native institution), but because it gave an overwhelming advantage to the man best trained in arms, and so was unfair. As a substitute for this barbarous plan, the system of settling civil cases by a jury, cumbrous and expensive as it was at first, since it involved taking the case to the King's Court, proved to be the beginning of a valuable reform. Use of a jury

Henry, in what are called the *Possessory Assizes*, dealt with certain civil cases. In some actions concerning land, the question turned on whether the "defendants" Henry and the Possessory Assizes had obtained possession wrongfully, others on whether the plaintiff's ancestors died in possession of the land. All these cases could now be called up from the local court to the King's Court by a simple writ. This was meant to prevent the delays which often occurred in local courts. It was also meant to prevent anyone in possession of land being threatened by the use of force which lay behind the "challenge to ordeal by battle". (*Note 17.*) Land cases

The conclusion of the matter lies outside the reign of Henry II; but as he is called the "father" of the English jury, it is well to join with his name the perfecting of the work he began. Trial by battle fell into disuse, and soon after trial by Ordeal followed it. In 1216 the Church forbade the further use of Ordeal, and in its place came the "*petty jury*", a body of twelve men drawn from the neighbourhood, who were to deliver a verdict <sup>1</sup> on the charge Petty jury

<sup>1</sup> i.e. a true saying.

baronial castles. But something had to be put in their place: it is generally far easier to destroy than to construct. And the fact that Henry succeeded in his constructive measures does far more to prove him a great statesman than any of his purely destructive work.

Idea of  
represent-  
atives  
Instead of attempting to make anything new, Henry took hold of a Saxon institution and bent it to a new shape. As we have seen, Saxon justice had been accustomed to the idea of an association of men who *represented* their district, whether it was the shire or the hundred, either to give information on oath, or to do justice. Representatives of the "tunmoots" sat in the hundred courts; representatives of the hundred in the shire courts; *Domesday Book* itself had been based on the evidence collected from sworn representatives. And it was from this idea of representation that Henry developed the jury system.

Justices  
in eyre  
and jury  
of present-  
ment  
The first step was the revival of his grandfather's plan of sending judges from the king's court to the local courts. These justices *in eyre*<sup>1</sup> still combined a care for the revenue with the task of bringing the king's justice home to all. But an important step forward was taken by the

Assize of  
Claren-  
don  
(1166)  
*Assize of Clarendon* in 1166, when it was ordered that these justices were to be met in each county by "twelve legal men from each hundred, and four from each township", who were to "present" to them notorious malefactors or men suspected of crime. These persons did not indeed

Jury of  
"pre-  
sentment"  
try the accused: they formed a jury "of presentment" (the origin of what came to be called the "grand jury"), whose task it was to decide whether a man ought to be tried

Trial by  
ordeal  
for any offence. The real trial was by the ordeal of water,<sup>2</sup> and if the accused failed to get through that he was condemned. Yet even when he came off triumphant from the Ordeal he was to leave the country within forty days. If

<sup>1</sup> An abbreviation of *in itinere* (on circuit).

<sup>2</sup> The accused had to dip his hand into boiling water and take out a stone from the bottom of the vessel. The hand was then tied up for a time (usually seven days), and if, when the bandages were taken off, it was found to be clean, the man was held acquitted.

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Henry  
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Petty  
jury

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before them. At first they were chosen for their presumed knowledge of the accused's crime; and if they could not agree, others were added till twelve were found of one mind. It was only by slow degrees that the functions of witness and jurymen were kept apart; and for a long time the accused could not call witnesses for himself, or have anyone to defend him, since the jury, being themselves witnesses, were supposed to know all there was to be known without outside assistance: but, imperfect as the jury was in its beginnings, it grew till it became one of the greatest safeguards of English liberty. (*Note 17.*)

Hitherto we have seen nothing but Henry's triumphs: we have seen him strike down disorder as personified by the barons; we have seen him strengthen and widen the royal justice till it became so formidable that the proudest noble dared not defy it, and so far-reaching that the meanest freeman could be sure of its protection. But there was yet one body over which the royal justice had no authority. It is Henry's attempt to enforce his authority over the Church that must next occupy us.

Royal law  
supreme  
over all  
except the  
church-  
men

## CHAPTER 12

### MONARCHY AND THE CHURCH

#### 1. THE CHURCH SINCE THE CONQUEST:

WILLIAM I, RUFUS, HENRY I

The quarrel between Henry II and Becket had its roots deep in the past.

We have already spoken of that school of Cluniac monks which had striven to set up a purer standard of life and duty in the Church.<sup>1</sup> One result of their efforts has been

Cluniac  
reforms

<sup>1</sup> See p. 47. In the century and a half after the Norman Conquest, a great many new monasteries were founded — one hundred, for instance, in the reign of Stephen, and a similar number in that of Henry II. New orders, also, were created, such as that of the Cistercians who founded the famous monasteries at

already remarked — the increased reputation of the monks who led strict lives, and the decline from favour of secular and parish clergy, who were less particular. Their objects and those of other Church reformers may be defined as follows. They saw with alarm that churchmen were every year becoming more involved in affairs of the world, more occupied with the administering of wide estates and the gathering of riches, more concerned with the cares of state, more interested in keeping themselves on an equality with the great nobles. It was needful to cut off this connection with the world. Thus they strove to make the clergy *celibate*, because they thought that marriage entangled men in worldly concerns; they cried out against the offence of *simony*, the buying of places in the church for money, and (though this came later) they objected to churchmen receiving offices at the hands of laymen. *Lay investiture*, as this was called, was an abuse, because it was likely that laymen were often guided in their choice by unworthy reasons. Churchmen would be appointed to livings, preferments, bishoprics, and so forth, not for their zeal or piety, but because they were popular and easy-going; they would thus be tempted to work for the favour of men, not for the cause of God.

Celibacy  
of clergy

Lay investiture

All of these objects were very laudable in themselves, and to the first two no objection could reasonably be raised. That the clergy should be celibate was an old rule which had been somewhat loosely kept, and clerical marriages caused great scandal. Simony was an offence that the Church had long battled with, having complete right on its side. But to attack lay investiture was another matter. The reformers wished to cut the Church loose from all lay control, to make it a body apart, independent, an *imperium in imperio*. But the fact was that the greater churchmen,

Difficulties in the way of abolishing lay investiture

Fountains and Rievaulx in Yorkshire, and who subsequently became renowned for the excellence of their wool; and an English order for both sexes was founded in 1131 by Gilbert of Sempringham which by the end of Henry II's reign included 700 canons and 1500 sisters. The monks were the great historians of the time, such as William of Malmesbury in the twelfth century and Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century.



the bishops and abbots, held large masses of landed property. Here lay the wealth of their sees and foundations; and as landowners they owed duties to the state like other landowners. They had no claim to escape taxation or the task of sending tenants to fight in the field.

The most distinguished of the reformers was *Hildebrand*, who, after being the trusted adviser of two popes, became himself Pope in 1073, under the title of Gregory VII. He entered with immense vigour on the work of making the Church independent of all kings and princes. And he claimed—and exercised—the right of excommunicating and deposing rulers who defied him. He embarked in a desperate quarrel with the Emperor, Henry IV, which survived them to convulse Europe for many years.

Oddly enough, Gregory did not attempt to check William the Conqueror, who was in the habit of “investing” his own bishops, and had declared that no Pope’s bulls or decrees should be obeyed in England unless he himself gave leave.<sup>1</sup> Even when Gregory demanded homage, and William refused, because no king of England had ever paid it before, Gregory gave way. He did so, no doubt, because he saw in William a king who, unlike most of the kings of the time, was really trying to improve his Church. William, too, had of his own accord taken a step which must have delighted Gregory. When he came to the throne, he had found the bishops accustomed to sit in the Shire Courts, and having churchmen and ecclesiastical offenders tried before them there, just like laymen, and under the same law. William withdrew the bishops from the Shire Courts; he replaced the English bishops by Normans; and he gave them courts of their own in which they tried and punished their own offenders under their own “canon” law. Church matters which had hitherto been discussed by a mixture of laymen and churchmen in the Witan were now transferred

<sup>1</sup> Eadmer, the sole contemporary authority, states that this claim was an innovation.



to a synod in which laymen had no place. As William had also appointed *Lanfranc* as Archbishop of Canterbury, and supported him in his efforts to make those of the clergy who had wives put them away, Gregory probably felt that it would be a mistake to do anything that might stir up a quarrel with him.

Reforms  
of Lan-  
franc

William Rufus, however, proved equally obstinate and far less honest of purpose. He was intensely greedy of money, and he and his Justiciar, Ranulf Flambard, strained every means to amass it. Under the feudal system large payments were always due to the feudal superior, in many cases the king, when one of his tenants died. There were *heriots* to be taken from the dead man's estate, and *reliefs* to be paid by the heir; if the heir was a minor, the administration of his estate came into the king's hands, and good profits might be drawn from it. Rufus and Flambard cast covetous eyes on the Church. Church lands did not pay heriots or reliefs, but if when an office fell vacant, it were not filled at once, the king might easily lay hands on the revenue that came in during the vacancy. Hence arose a practice of keeping offices vacant for a considerable time. This gross abuse came to a head in 1089 when Lanfranc died and no successor was appointed to his Archbishopric. Four years passed away, and, to the scandal of everyone, the Church in England was still left without a head, in order that the King might pocket its revenues.

William II  
and the  
Church

Appoint-  
ments in  
the  
Church

In 1093 Rufus fell sick, and, believing himself to be dying, he wished to make his peace with Heaven. Accordingly he appointed *Anselm*, Abbot of Bec, to the Archbishopric. However unworthy the motive, the choice was excellent. Anselm won the respect of all by his learning, righteousness, and tenderness. As it happened, however, William did not die, and as his health grew better, his conduct grew worse; penitence soon vanished; blasphemous and brutal habits returned. From the first Anselm had foreseen that there was trouble in store for him. "Will ye

Anselm

Investiture quarrel between Anselm and Rufus yoke me, a weak old sheep, with that fierce young bull, the King of England," said he, when he was first offered the primacy. But, although so modest, Anselm would never yield to threats. He refused to make Rufus any payment for his appointment, but gave the money in charity instead. When Pope Urban sent over the "pall", or scarf of office, Anselm would not receive it at the king's hands, but took it himself from the high altar at Canterbury. He rebuked the misdoings of the King and the Court, and so angered William that his life was scarcely safe. He had at length to leave the kingdom.

One of Henry I's earliest and most popular acts was to recall Anselm from his exile. But though Henry was reasonable and just, yet even he could not agree with Anselm. Their dispute never ripened into a quarrel, but it was a hot dispute. Indeed agreement was scarcely possible, for Anselm had been to Rome and had returned more than ever strong against lay investiture. When first appointed by Rufus he had paid homage, but he now refused this homage to Henry; and when Henry invested bishops he would not consecrate them. Yet Henry could not allow his archbishops and bishops to be altogether independent of him, for churchmen in those days were among the greatest landowners; and no king could allow so large a portion of his realm to pass to men owning allegiance to a foreigner, the Pope.

Here we come, not to a quarrel between two men, but a divergence between two great institutions. The Church was advancing claims which the Crown could not grant. It was only the first of a long series; we shall see the difference at times widen, at times almost close up, but it was never quite healed, and it eventually led to the great breach which we call the Reformation.

In this matter of investitures there was a good deal to be said on both sides. Henry and Anselm settled it in a reasonable way by a compromise. Bishops and abbots were to be chosen by their cathedral chapter and by their monks

respectively, but the election was to be held in the king's court. They were to receive the ring which stood for their union with their flock, and the pastoral staff which represented the shepherd's care over his sheep, from the Church, because these things were symbols of their spiritual power; but they were to pay homage for their worldly possessions to the king, who was their master in respect of the world. This compromise worked well, and was afterwards adopted by the Pope and Emperor as the right settlement of their dispute also.

In King Stephen's reign, as we have seen, the quarrel with the Bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln was one of the causes of Matilda's triumph; later on he quarrelled with the Church over the appointment to the Archbishopric of York. His reign witnessed an increase in the power of the Church. While the barons were fighting with their king and each other, the Church was steadily working towards that independence from lay control which it desired. (Note 13.)

## 2. HENRY II AND BECKET

Thus Henry II had to fight the matter over again, though this time on new ground, and the struggle was even more violent than in William II's day. For, though Henry had reason on his side, which William had not, yet the one king was fully as hot-tempered and impatient as the other, while on the side of the Church, instead of the gentle, patient Anselm, stood *Thomas Becket*, at least as fiery, wilful, and rash of speech as his royal master.

Not the least irritating of Becket's qualities in the King's eyes was his apparent ingratitude. Henry had raised Becket from an obscure station. He had made a personal friend of him, had joked and feasted in his company, had made him his Chancellor, and consulted with him on all the measures needed to bring the realm into order, and believed him to be heart and soul with him. Thus, when the Archbishopric

Henry II  
and  
Becket

Becket's  
character  
and early  
career

Becket  
made  
Arch-  
bishop  
(1162)

of Canterbury fell vacant, giving the King the chance of putting in a man to forward his ideas, none seemed so suitable as Becket. But Becket objected, because he saw his first duty would be to the Church and he would never allow himself to be used as a tool to bring it under royal control. He therefore hesitated to accept. "If this be done," said he, "our friendship will soon turn to bitter hate." Yet the King persisted in his idea that Becket's usefulness to him would be increased if he were Archbishop.

Once consecrated, Becket resigned his Chancellorship, justifying himself with the words, "Man cannot serve two masters". This was but a foretaste of the mixture of zeal and want of tact which was to distinguish the rest of his career. He might have made plain his wish henceforth to serve God without likening the service of his royal master and friend to that of Mammon. But Becket never did anything by halves. Hitherto, though he had always led a pure and honest life, he had been luxurious and worldly; suddenly he turned into an ascetic of the severest type, fasting with extreme rigour, wearing a hair-shirt, washing the feet of the sick and the poor. Yet Becket's change was no hypocrisy. He was a man who had taken up a new duty, and he meant to perform it with all his might. He was determined to preserve intact the Church's rights. The fact that in doing so he would come into collision with the King did not turn him aside for a moment.

Henry II and the privileges of the Church

We recall that Henry II's chief aim was to destroy all those privileges and immunities which hindered the king's law; we know that owing to William I's change the Church was the one really great institution which still held these privileges; we can see that it was inevitably over this point that the battle would arise.

The provocation was not long in coming. Clerics who had committed crimes were still tried in ecclesiastical courts. In 1163 (the year after Becket became Archbishop) Henry, angry at a cleric who had committed a murder having been

sentenced to a very trifling punishment, required that the clergy should obey the "customs of the realm". To this Becket verbally agreed, but as the "customs" were not very certain, a commission was appointed by the King to draw them up. This commission produced the celebrated *Constitutions of Clarendon*. Some old rules were repeated; clerics were not to leave the King's realm without his leave, and appeals were not to be taken to Rome, but to be heard before the King: the agreement made between Henry I and Anselm about investitures and homage was re-enacted. A new order was made that villeins might not enter the service of the Church without leave of their lords. On the chief matter in dispute it said that clerics who had committed crimes — "criminous clerks" — having been tried in the ecclesiastical courts *and degraded from their orders* (as they would be, if found guilty), should be then handed over to the king's courts for sentence. There was no idea of the king's courts sentencing a clerk; having been degraded he would be no longer a clerk but a layman.

The Con-  
stitutions  
of Claren-  
don (1164)

Criminous  
clerks

We might think this of small consequence; we wonder why clerics should object to the royal justice, and why the King should distrust Church courts; we presume that the number of clerics who commit crimes would be very small. Such notions are misleading.

Clerks  
and  
Church  
Courts

The King was in no way hostile to the Church courts as such. But he wished clerks who had been found guilty of felony in them to be sentenced in lay courts and so made liable to exactly the same penalties as other criminals. For the Church courts had no power of life and death. Their punishments were limited to ordering penances, which, however severe, could not meet cases of murder. The result was an inequality of justice. A layman who murdered was hanged; a cleric was merely degraded and put to penance. Again, we are led to wonder why churchmen, who at this time especially were anxious to purify and raise their order, should desire to protect their guilty

Punish-  
ment of  
clerks

members.<sup>1</sup> The explanation lies in the same desire which we have noticed before: to sever their order from the lay world, and exalt it by the severance. If a cleric were degraded from his orders, this, they held, should be punishment enough. If he were submitted to the ordinary courts, it would be an admission that he was no better than an ordinary man, and he would be punished twice for the same offence.

We must remember that in the Middle Ages the term "cleric" included a far larger class than it does nowadays. Wide  
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clerks claimed to try not only cases where a cleric was the accused party, but also any case in which a cleric was concerned, the number of cases withdrawn from the royal courts and dealt with by courts that could not inflict meet punishment was exceedingly large.

The issue, then, between Henry and his Archbishop, was of great importance to both sides. When the Constitutions were produced it was three days before Becket could be induced to agree to them. At last he did agree owing to the pressure of the Bishops and the two senior earls present. But then Becket refused to seal the document — and without sealing it remained invalid. Then he was summoned to answer a charge that the Archbishop's court had failed in Quarrel  
between  
Henry  
and  
Becket

<sup>1</sup> Clerks who claimed to be tried by the Church Courts claimed "benefit of clergy".



justice in a land plea. Instead of appearing in person, he sent four knights to answer for him. He was then summoned to a council at Northampton to answer the original charge, and a further one of contempt of the King's court. Becket appeared in full robes clasping a crucifix. After the real business of the court had been disposed of, the King brought against him a series of charges relating to his conduct as Chancellor, and demanded an account of the moneys that had passed through his hands. Becket protested against Henry's injustice and appealed to Rome — for this he was condemned by the Assembly. "This is a fearful day," said one of his trembling followers. "Ay," retorted Thomas, "but the Day of Judgment will be more fearful." He fled from the town at dead of night, and escaped to France.

Then began six years of incessant struggle. Becket sought help from Pope Alexander III, but Alexander, himself being persecuted by the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, dared not affront Henry by supporting Becket too warmly. Henry, on the other hand, pursued the fight vigorously by exiling the Archbishop's kinsfolk, and by seizing the revenues of Canterbury. Becket replied by excommunicating Henry's ministers and bishops, and so the fight went on.

At last, in 1170, a truce was made, and Becket returned to the kingdom on the understanding that he was to let bygones be bygones. But, just before his return, Henry had caused his son to be crowned. To crown a king was a privilege of the Archbishops of Canterbury, but as Becket was in disgrace Henry had made Becket's enemies, Roger of York, and the Bishop of London, perform the ceremony. Becket, on his return, suspended them both. This threw Henry, who had himself now crossed over to France, into one of his violent rages. All the trouble taken to have his son crowned was wasted through Becket's act. On hearing the news, Henry cried out: "Are there none of the dastards eating my bread who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" Immediately four knights started for England, resolved to



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Becket  
leaves the  
kingdom

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Return of  
Becket

carry out the King's wish by some means, fair or foul. After a stormy interview with Becket in his palace, they followed him armed into the Cathedral. Fierce words passed, and Becket retorted no less fiercely. A scuffle began. Becket was struck and retaliated, and then one of the knights drew his sword; the rest did the same, and the Archbishop was murdered beside his own altar steps.

Becket straightway became a martyr. If ever a dead man won a fight, it was he. Henry, who had many advantages of reason and justice on his side, lost most of them by his own frantic words and the more frantic interpretation which the four knights placed on them. Henceforward the one thing to do was to yield. He swore his innocence, and at a later date even submitted to be scourged by the monks of Canterbury at Becket's tomb. But all hope of asserting his full power over the Church courts was gone. Not till the Reformation did the royal power prevail, and for more than three centuries criminous clerks continued to be sentenced in their own courts, and what was more important, the door was opened to fresh inroads by the popes. The humbling of King John, the plundering taxation of Henry III's day were indirectly due to Becket's martyrdom. But Henry did not lose all his powers. By the Concordat of Avranches (1172) made with the Pope he claimed that existing usage should be recognized. He was able to preserve some control of appeals to Rome, to check in certain matters any further increase in the jurisdiction of the Church courts, and elections to bishoprics were conducted as before in the king's chapel and, therefore, under the king's influence. (Note 18.)

## CHAPTER 13

IRELAND AND THE END OF HENRY II'S  
REIGN

## 1. IRELAND

Amid the engrossing importance of what Henry did at home we have had little leisure to attend to what Henry was abroad. Yet in the eyes of any but an Englishman, Henry was of greater consequence as a European ruler than as an English king. Through his father he ruled Anjou; through his mother, Normandy; through his wife, Aquitaine, being thus master of the western half of France;<sup>1</sup> and we may add, what has hitherto been passed over, that he had in a sense conquered Ireland. As early as 1155 Henry had sought papal sanction for an expedition against Ireland (the Papacy claimed dominion over all islands), and Adrian IV, the only Englishman who ever was a Pope, is said to have granted him a licence on condition that he would hold the country as a papal fief. Owing to the opposition of his mother, the Empress Matilda, and to other difficulties, Henry abandoned the project, and did not return to it till 1169, when an unexpected opportunity presented itself. Ireland had never united, but was still split up among rival kings. One of these, Dermot, King of Leinster, was driven from Ireland by Roderic O'Connor, who claimed kingship over the whole island. Dermot fled to England and sought aid from Henry II. Henry, too busy to undertake the task himself, allowed Dermot to get what help he could from the barons. These were ready enough for any adventure, and one of them, Richard de Clare, sometimes called Strongbow, helped Dermot to rout his enemies, and by marrying Dermot's

Henry's  
contin-  
ental  
powerThe  
conquest  
of IrelandDivisions  
of  
IrelandStrong-  
bow

<sup>1</sup> The marriage of his son, Geoffrey, with Constance of Brittany brought this duchy into the Angevin power, and made Henry II's dominions extend from the Somme to the Pyrenees in a continuous line.

**Henry subdues the pale** heiress succeeded to his kingdom on Dermot's death. Henry, somewhat alarmed lest his vassals should become independent, crossed over to Ireland. A satisfactory number of Irish kings paid him homage, and meant nothing by it. As a matter of fact his authority stretched no farther than the Normans could conquer, namely, the district round Dublin and Wexford, called the English "pale". Beyond that the Irish ruled and quarrelled as before, but Henry had at any rate added a new title. He was Lord of Ireland.

## 2. END OF HENRY'S REIGN

**Rebellions of Henry's sons and great barons** For the rest of Henry's life, trouble overtook him. The great barons who had trembled before him lost their respect for a king who had been worsted by the Church. Men like Hugh of Chester, Hugh Bigod, and Robert Mowbray were very ready to rebel against a king whose life's work had been spent in the effort to tame their powers. His children, too, plotted against him. Even his wife deserted him. Rebellion was soon on foot both in England and oversea. The Scots crossed the border. The King of France gave help to the rebels. From this accumulation of dangers Henry seemed scarce likely to escape, yet he had stout friends, and the people of England stood by him. They at least had no wish to see the barons lift their heads again. Thus, by the aid of his militia the rebel Earls of Leicester and Norfolk were beaten in the Battle of Fornham, and the peasantry took care that none of the fugitives escaped alive. The King of Scots, William the Lion, was surprised and made prisoner at Alnwick. He was not allowed to go until he had, by the Treaty of Falaise (see p. 101), paid homage to the King of England as his feudal superior, and put in his hands the castles of Edinburgh, Stirling, Roxburgh, Jedburgh, and Berwick (1174). Abroad, Henry with his army of mercenaries soon forced the French king to sue for peace.

Yet, even so, the old King had little rest. His sons quarrelled like young lions over the division of his inheritance. The eldest, Henry, till his death in 1183, plotted constantly with the kings of France against his father. Geoffrey provoked his barons in Brittany to incessant quarrels till death too removed him. Richard took up his elder brother's game, joined the King of France, actually led an army against his father, and forced him to make a degrading peace. The last blow was the discovery that his youngest, his favourite son, John, had joined the rebellion. Smitten with fever, the old King turned his face to the wall, murmuring "Shame, shame on a conquered king", and so passed away.

Plots of  
Henry's  
sons

Death of  
Henry II  
(1189)

## CHAPTER 14

### RICHARD I—THE CRUSADES

#### 1. EUROPE AND THE CRUSADES

So powerful a sovereign as Henry II had not lacked suitable marriages for his daughters. One married Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, another married the King of Castile. Thus the family, sprung from the counts of the little province of Anjou, had gained a position in Europe not unlike that won in later days by the counts of an obscure Austrian territory of Habsburg. But there was another branch of the Angevins, which had acquired by marriage a title to the kingdom of Jerusalem; and to the story of the Crusades and of the part which the Angevin Richard Cœur de Lion played in them we must now turn. (Note 19.)

Marriage  
alliances  
of Henry's  
daughters

The  
Crusades

In the year 635 Jerusalem, hitherto belonging to the Christian Empire of the East, had fallen into the hands of the Arabs, but the way to the holy places had not been shut by this conquest. Christian pilgrims had been allowed to come and go at all seasons. In the eleventh century, however, a fresh horde of Eastern invaders swept over Syria.

Fall of  
Jerusalem  
(635)



These were the Seljuk Turks. When they conquered Jerusalem in 1076 they began a policy of persecution. Christians were robbed, insulted, sometimes murdered. A pilgrim who visited the Holy Land did so at the risk of his life.

Stories of Turkish brutality flowed westwards and fell on ears open to catch them. It is easy to misunderstand and even to resent that policy of the Church, which aimed at setting it free from the control of kings, striving to exalt the Pope at their expense, but that is partly because we look at it from the modern standpoint of the *nation*. But in the eleventh century the idea of nationality was vague. There were no "nations" as we know them. All European monarchs, instead of regarding themselves as separate heads of separate nations, thought of themselves as members of one great body — "Christendom". And Christendom had badges of unity, its temporal head the Emperor, its spiritual head the Pope — the twin champions of Christendom. "Behold here are Two Swords"; at times one sword was turned against the other, but against the infidel both could unite. As it was a matter touching the faith, the popes should take the lead. To do them justice they did not shrink from the task. And it was no light task to end the jarring wars of greed and selfishness at home, and send forth men of all races, to fight side by side for Christendom.

There was another motive besides zeal for the faith on which the popes could rely: this was the spirit of adventure. To undertake a difficult and dangerous enterprise, to rescue the downtrodden, to go where blows fell thickest, even though the reward was but empty renown, was the duty of the knight, the spirit of what a later age called "chivalry". And so when, at the Council of Clermont in 1095, Pope Urban II preached the Crusade, he had no lack, not merely of hearers, but doers, of the Word. Some in impetuous zeal even hurried off unarmed, a mere rabble, and perished by the way, but they were followed by a disciplined force including the bravest knights in Christendom.

The policy  
of  
Christen-  
dom  
against  
the infidel

The first  
Crusade  
(1096-99)

Crusade  
preached  
by  
Urban  
(1095)



Jerusalem was captured from the Turks in 1099, and Godfrey de Bouillon was chosen as its ruler. Unhappily, the mere love of fighting had mastered the Crusaders' hearts. Even a good and virtuous knight like Godfrey, too pious to wear a crown of gold where once Christ had worn a crown of thorns, had no spirit of mercy. He, like the rest, regarded himself as an avenger. Without shrinking, he took his share in the hideous massacres, even of women and children, that followed the storming of Jerusalem. And this pitiless fury turned too against the Jews. Not merely in Palestine but in distant parts of Europe, they were plundered and ill-treated by kings and barons. The result of this violence reacted on the Christian kingdom in Palestine. Founded on force, it could only be upheld by force. The Crusaders were no more than a garrison in a hostile country, whose power was maintained by their castles and their strong arms.

Jerusalem  
taken  
(1099)

The king-  
dom of  
Jerusa-  
lem

For a time the Crusaders held their own. Godfrey died, and was succeeded by his brother, Baldwin: he by a second Baldwin. Then there was none left but a daughter of Baldwin I. She was married to Fulk of Anjou, King Henry II of England's grandfather. Thus Fulk became king in Jerusalem, and so set up the Angevin dynasty there.

Years passed by. A second Crusade, led by Louis VII of France and the Emperor of the West, failed to enlarge or strengthen the Christian power in Palestine. And then the Moslems grew aggressive. Their great leader, *Saladin*, captured stronghold after stronghold. At length Guy de Lusignan, king in right of his marriage with the Angevin princess Sibylla, met Saladin in battle on the hills above Galilee. Tormented by a foe whom they could not strike, maddened by smoke from the brushwood which Saladin had fired, parched with thirst in sight of water they could not reach, most of the Crusaders of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem fought that day their last field. The Holy City surrendered soon after. Guy himself remained a captive in Saladin's hands.

The  
second  
Crusade  
(1147)

Saladin

Battle of  
Tiberias  
(1187)

Fall of the  
kingdom  
of Jerusa-  
lem (1187)

Henry II  
and the  
Crusaders

The fall of Jerusalem had shocked all Christendom. Straightway there was a call for another Crusade. England echoed to it, as did other countries. But to Henry II the disaster came home with special force; it was the overthrow of his Angevin kinsmen. Accordingly Henry himself had meant to take a vigorous part in the new Crusade. He imposed a tax, the *Saladin Tithe*, to pay the expenses of the Crusade. This tax is notable as the first instance in England of a tax on personal property, i.e. goods or "moveables", as distinct from "real" property, i.e. land. Death, however, cut short his plans, but he left the task as a legacy to his son, Richard. Obedience to his father's wishes had not so far been Richard's strong point, yet to go on a Crusade was the very thing to which his adventurous spirit inclined him.

Richard  
Cœur de  
Lion  
(1189-99)

## 2. RICHARD I AND THE THIRD CRUSADE

The third  
Crusade  
(1189-92)

The third Crusade, in which Richard played the chief part, is the best known of all. The character of Richard himself sheds a lustre over it. Medieval and modern storytellers have been attracted by his reckless valour, his personal strength, his amazing exploits in war. Nor was Richard alone: his antagonist, Saladin, is renowned for his martial skill and courtesy, which drew from the Crusaders a respect which they seldom gave to any infidel. Further, the third Crusade was pre-eminent for the number of crowned heads who joined in it. The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa led a host across Asia Minor, losing his life in the enterprise. Philip Augustus, the King of France, accompanied Richard. Leopold, Duke of Austria, led his forces to the Holy Land also. In every respect, both in persons and in numbers of the combatants, the Crusade was on the grand scale.

Richard's  
Crusade

Unluckily the motives of the leaders in no way corresponded to the magnificence of the enterprise. Richard, though an admirable fighter, and no bad tactician either, had that imperious spirit which made him even more dan-

gerous to his friends than to his foes. On his way to the Holy Land he engaged in one quarrel in Sicily, and another in Cyprus, where he dethroned the king. As soon as he arrived he pressed on the *siege of Acre*, which had lasted two years, to a victorious end, but then plunged headlong into quarrels. To decide who should be king of Jerusalem before Jerusalem was taken, was perhaps premature, and certainly difficult. The Angevin Queen Sibylla had died without children. Philip favoured one of his friends; Richard hotly pressed the claims of Sibylla's husband, Guy de Lusignan. Incessant bickering went on between French and English, till Philip withdrew his men and went back to France to plot at home with John against Richard. Then Richard led the Crusaders southwards winning a great battle against the Saracens at *Arsouf*, by means of the patient steadiness of his crossbowmen and an impetuous charge by his knights. Twice he came within twelve miles of Jerusalem, but never was strong enough to form the siege; at last he made a treaty with Saladin, securing for Christian pilgrims rights to visit Jerusalem unhindered, and retaining Joppa. It was not much to achieve at the expense of blood and treasure; the capture of Acre alone was said to have cost 300,000 men.

Richard's  
quarrels  
—the  
journey

Siege of  
Acre  
(1191)

Philip of  
France  
returns

Failure of  
Richard

Treaty  
with  
Saladin

Richard was now to reap the harvest of his quarrels. One enemy had already gone home: it was indeed the news of John's intrigues with the French king which decided Richard that if he wished to retain the Crown of England, he could no longer battle in Palestine. But he had made a deadly foe of another Crusader. He had found Leopold of Austria's banner set above his own. He had caused it to be flung down with ignominy. Leopold bided his time, and the chance for revenge came when, on his way home, Richard was shipwrecked on the coasts of the Adriatic, and, trying to cross Austria in disguise, fell a prisoner into Leopold's hands. How Leopold sold him to the Emperor Henry VI, who also owed him a grudge for his conduct in

Richard's  
return

His  
capture

**His ransom** Sicily, and how Henry held him captive for four months till a ransom was paid and he was accepted as feudal overlord of England is too well known to need more words. The whole episode offers an instructive comment on the hopeless selfishness which underlay the third Crusade. The enterprise begun for the rescue of the Holy City ended with the selling of one Christian monarch by another.<sup>1</sup>

**Decline of crusading spirit** With Richard's difficulties after his return we have now no concern. From Richard's day English crusading zeal dwindled. It is true that in 1240 Henry III's brother led an expedition to Palestine, and got a favourable treaty from the Sultan, and Edward I while still prince, after his overthrow of Simon de Montfort, also took the Cross, distinguished himself by capturing Nazareth, and indeed nearly lost his life there by a stab from a poisoned dagger. But none of these expeditions were comparable in scale to Richard's.

**Effects of the Crusades** It remains to notice a few of the effects of the Crusades. They removed from England a number of the most turbulent and dangerous barons. Some of these never came home; those who did return had often sold much of their possessions in order to find the money to pay their expenses, and so found themselves weakened. Robert of Normandy pledged his dukedom to his brother, and lost it; Richard himself jocularly declared, "I would have sold London itself, if I could have found a rich enough buyer". He did sell all he could, including the right to the payment of homage by Scottish kings. What Henry had won by the Treaty of Falaise, Richard suffered William the Lion to buy back again. In this time of general sale many made good bargains, and none better than townsmen. Hitherto towns had been mostly under the control of some lord, either the king or a baron, on whose domain the town stood; they were ruled by his sheriff or bailiff; they were liable to

**Towns buy freedom**

<sup>1</sup> Richard's ransom was such a terrible burden on his people that special taxes had to be imposed to raise it.

pay his dues. Many of the towns took advantage of the Crusades to buy charters, which relieved them of this control. Henceforth they were free, having their government in their own hands, able to impose and collect their own dues, and make their own rules for the conduct of trade. In this way the Crusades gave a great stimulus to the development of our towns.

They encouraged trade also. The crusading armies opened new trade routes, or reopened old ones long blocked. Men grew familiar with the more refined civilization of the East, and on their return desired to have Eastern goods and Eastern luxuries in their Western homes. All this led to a new intercourse between East and West, which had results far more solid than the erratic exploits of the Crusaders. But this commercial prosperity affected England little. It centred round the Mediterranean ports, and England, in its northern isolation, lay in those days far from the world's highway.

New  
trade  
routes

The choice of Richard as a national hero-king is not a little curious. A hero of a sort he certainly was: he possessed the strength of limb, the skill with his weapons, the reckless courage, which were the chief glories of the knight errant, the ideal of that age. In addition, he was personally popular. He was fond of songs and jest, being himself a fair musician and gifted with a ready wit, as may be seen from his reply to the Pope, who claimed as "his son" a bishop who had been taken prisoner while fighting in a battle. Richard sent the Pope the bishop's coat of mail with the pointed inquiry, "Know now whether this be thy son's coat, or no". He was not haughty unless he was affronted, and though his temper was blazing hot, he forgave as readily as he flew into wrath, and these sudden pardons, these unlooked-for escapes from the lion's jaws, were so unexpected as to win him a character for clemency. He was open and simple, and the ruler who never puzzles his subjects is generally liked. But with all these qualities he was essentially not

Character  
of  
Richard I

English; he had very little English blood in him; he took little interest in England, save that her men made good fighters. He only spent ten months in England out of the ten years which he reigned. When he came back from the Crusades he plunged into wars in France, and he met an appropriate death, being mortally wounded by an arrow from the Castle of Chaluz, which he was besieging in order to get from his vassal a treasure which had been discovered there. It is characteristic of him that he forgave on his deathbed Bertrand de Gourdon, the man who fired the shot, and equally characteristic of his time that one of his mercenary captains kept Bertrand in prison till Richard had passed away, and then flayed him alive.

## CHAPTER 15

### JOHN (1199-1216)

#### 1. CROWN AND NATION

The long period covered by the reigns of John and Henry III possesses one strongly marked character throughout. It was an age of bad government. John was oppressive, Henry was feeble: both alike were unsatisfactory. In each case the barons interfered to set matters right. Thus in both reigns there was great progress made in the building up of our peculiar English Constitution in its most essential features: (1) the right of the whole nation to settle its own affairs by means of a Representative Assembly; and (2) the responsibility of the king's ministers, not to the king, but to Parliament. Putting the matter more shortly, the thirteenth century is the age of the Making of Parliament. And it is further remarkable that Parliament, itself the product of the weakness of two kings, was confirmed by the policy of a third king who was good and strong. Edward I might

John and  
Henry III

Parlia-  
ment



have used his strength to destroy the infant Parliament; on the contrary, he fostered it.

We have spoken of Parliament as the product of the badness and weakness of two kings, and throughout we shall notice that, as a general rule, the Constitution develops most when the Crown is for any reason ineffective. A bad ruler provokes those efforts to restrain the absolute royal power which we call constitutional government. A weak ruler gives the opportunity for them. And as the power of Parliament grew at the expense of the royal authority, it is obvious that, as a rule, when one is vigorous the other will be languid, and vice versa. Exceptions will occur when a strong king encourages Parliament to be very courageous, or when both King and Parliament are united in one policy, or when both alike are weak because some other body in the state has the mastery over them. But ordinarily Parliament, in its early history, is only remarkable when it is striving to abridge the power of the Crown; and its opportunity comes when the Crown is either misusing its power, or has temporarily lost it.

Oppor-  
tunities of  
Parlia-  
ment

From the accession of Richard to the accession of Edward I — a period of over eighty years — the Crown was, from one cause or another, less strong. Richard was much absent from England, and left his powers to men acting as regents; John was vicious, and provoked a general rebellion; Henry III was a boy only nine years old, and his reign began with a long minority, during which regents governed in his name. Even when he grew up he proved to be feeble and extravagant, and he trusted in favourites who misgoverned the realm so as to provoke a second rebellion much like that which John provoked. Thus these eighty years were unusually favourable to the growth of any body that could control and reform the royal power; and each of the rebellions — that of 1215 and that of 1264 — marks a very important step in the growth of our Constitution.

Weakness  
of Crown  
(1189-  
1272)



## 2. KING JOHN AND THE LOSS OF FRENCH POSSESSIONS

John has won himself an ill-name in history. Yet we may note that there are two views of him. He certainly brought great misfortunes on himself, but some have thought that he had tremendous difficulties to face and very powerful enemies against him. He is said by one historian to be "the ablest of the Angevins".<sup>1</sup> In any event his reign is of the greatest importance, for his misfortunes turned to the profit of the country.

John being the youngest of Henry II's sons, was at first portionless: hence his name "Lackland", a title which became more appropriate when his folly lost the English possessions in Normandy. His father, who gave him a love he did not in the least deserve, quarrelled with his other sons in the effort to find dominions to give him. He was sent to Ireland that he might conciliate the Irish tributary kings, but he only insulted them by his rude behaviour. He plotted with the King of France against his father, and by his treachery brought his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. Richard knew what manner of brother he was leaving behind him. He tried to bind John by gratitude, giving him the lordship of Ireland, and making him swear not to visit England for three years. John had as little respect for gratitude as he had for an oath. Richard had hardly been gone a year when John came back into England, quarrelled with the justiciar, Longchamp, and began to rule like a king over the vast estates he had obtained by his marriage with the heiress of Gloucester. The news of his brother's captivity tempted him further. He acted as if Richard were dead and himself monarch: he did homage for Normandy to Philip, defying Richard's officers and gathering a party round him.

His  
treachery  
to  
Richard I

Alliance  
with  
Philip  
Augustus

<sup>1</sup> He was also the favourite child of his father and of his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine. This may perhaps be an indication that there is more to be said for John than historians usually allow, for both Henry and Eleanor were exceptionally shrewd and able people.

self to support him even should Richard return. When Richard was at last ransomed he would have had justice on his side had he put John to death as a traitor; but he despised the slippery prince too much to fear him. John, by a show of submission, made his peace; he was clever enough to appreciate the value of the advice in which Philip Augustus told him that his brother was once more at liberty — "The devil is unchained: take care of yourself". Richard gave him back none of his estates, so that for the rest of the reign he was powerless.

With his brother's sudden death in 1199, however, came John's opportunity. He had very little difficulty in succeeding to all Richard's wide dominions. Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, all acknowledged him as king. His mother Eleanor secured Poitou and Guienne for him, while the chief barons in England, with the Archbishop and the Justiciar at their head, declared him to be rightful king in England. It is not surprising that the hereditary claims of his nephew *Arthur of Brittany* were set aside, for, untrustworthy as John had proved himself, he was a man, and Arthur was a boy unsuited to be a king. Moreover, Arthur's father, Geoffrey, had been the most unpopular of all Henry II's sons, and the choice of John as the elder male relation of the dead king was only following precedent.

John  
becomes  
king

Prince  
Arthur

It is important to distinguish in John's reign the successive steps by which he managed to lose the support of all branches of his subjects: first, how he lost his domains in France; second, how he affronted the Church; third, how by oppressive government at home he irritated the barons and the people.

Having an enemy in France, Arthur of Brittany, it was clearly John's policy to keep friendly with Philip Augustus, King of France, lest that monarch should take up Arthur's cause. This would not have been easy in any case. Philip was sure to seek a pretext for war, but John made peace impossible. His weak point lay in Aquitaine, where his

Quarrel  
with  
King of  
France

mother's influence alone had won over the great lords. John's headstrong temper soon lost what his mother had won. He divorced his wife Avice of Gloucester, and then carried off Isabella of Angoulême to be his wife in spite of the threats of the Church. As the Gloucester family was the most influential in the English baronage, and the affianced husband of Isabella was the Count of La Marche, John's greatest vassal in Aquitaine, John's act was a master-stroke of folly. At one blow he made deadly enemies at home and abroad. Philip readily took up the complaint. He summoned John as his vassal. John refused to come.

Philip  
invades  
Nor-  
mandy

Thereupon Philip declared war, and joined with Arthur of Brittany in invading *Normandy*. La Marche and Arthur hurried to besiege the castle of Mirebeau, where John's mother, Eleanor, held out. Roused for once to vigour, John surprised the rebels and captured Arthur. He could not resist the temptation of murdering him, which was as unwise as it was cruel, for Arthur a prisoner would have been a most valuable hostage, whereas his murder only gave John's enemies a fresh weapon. Still, had John shown any energy, he might have saved Normandy, for Richard had built on the Seine a magnificent castle — *Château Gaillard*<sup>1</sup>

Murder  
of Arthur  
of  
Brittany

Fall of  
Château  
Gaillard  
(1204)

—strong enough to delay and defy an invader till help might be gathered in England. For a year Château Gaillard held out, but John let it fall by starvation with hardly any effort to relieve it. And with it fell the English power in France. *Normandy, Touraine, Maine, Anjou*, and the north of *Aquitaine* all came into Philip's hands. Bordeaux and the south of Guienne still remained in English hands; but

Loss of  
English  
pos-  
sessions  
in  
France

Only Bor-  
deaux,  
Guienne,  
and  
Channel  
Islands  
left

nothing else save the Channel Islands was left of the magnificent heritage which Henry II had handed down.

This was a disaster for John Lackland, but not perhaps for his English subjects. Hitherto England had been overburdened by the importance of the French dominions. The loss of Normandy proved England's gain, in that it brought

<sup>1</sup> i.e. "Saucy Castle".

a unity which was new. Hitherto kings and barons alike had been half French, half English, with estates and interests on both sides of the Channel. Henceforward they were to be English only. And a king who neglected his duty at home could no longer take refuge in his French dominions till the storm had blown over. (*Note 20.*)

Growth of  
English  
national  
unity

### 3. QUARREL WITH THE CHURCH

The result of confining John's enterprises to England was the speedy concentration of the hatred of all classes upon him. In 1205 Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, died. He had been appointed in 1193 by Richard, with whom he had been in the Holy Land and who had made him a commissioner for the collection of the King's ransom. Hubert was an official rather than a churchman; he had discharged the duties of justiciar and chancellor with some credit; he had acted as a check upon John. The right of electing a successor belonged to the monks of Canterbury, but under Henry I's agreement the election should take place in the king's court. However, at the time, the monks were having a dispute with the bishops of the province of Canterbury, who claimed a right to take part in the election, and, thinking to get quit of interference by both bishops and King, they met secretly and chose Reginald their Sub-Prior, sending him off to Rome with a party of monks to get his election confirmed by the Pope. Reginald was too vain to hold his tongue; the secret reached the ears of the King, who, in high wrath, compelled the monks to make a second election of John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, and sent off another embassy to Rome. The Pope, Innocent III, one of the most capable and masterful men who ever held the office, received both embassies and disapproved of both candidates. The Sub-Prior was a nobody; John de Grey was a friend of the King's, a better soldier than he was a bishop. One had been elected secretly, the other by dint

Quarrel  
with the  
Church  
(1205)

Election  
of  
Arch-  
bishop of  
Canter-  
bury

John  
appoints  
de Grey

of threats. Innocent always claimed the right of supervising the election of bishops — and he was not slow in acting. He annulled both elections and persuaded the monks who were in the embassy to choose his own candidate. His action may have been high-handed; he certainly forced his candidate on the monks every whit as much as John had forced de Grey; but about the wisdom of his choice there could be only one opinion, for he chose a distinguished English Cardinal, *Stephen Langton*.

Then began a violent struggle. John refused to allow *Langton* to set foot in England. Innocent replied with an interdict which suspended services, closed the churches, and stopped the bells; marriages could not be celebrated inside the churches; even the dead went unblessed to their graves in unconsecrated ground. All the bishops, save John de Grey of Norwich and Peter des Roches of Winchester, stood by the Pope, and the clergy followed. John turned on the clergy, driving some oversea and confiscating their revenues, and outlawing all. Innocent retorted with an excommunication which touched the godless John but little. Indeed, he was doing well; he was growing rich on Church funds, and with them taking soldiers into his pay in order to settle old scores with the Welsh and Scots. At last Innocent threatened to depose him, and even invited the King of France to drive him off the throne.

This once more revealed the weakness of John's position. Had he been supreme over the clergy, interdict and excommunication would have troubled him no more than they troubled Henry VIII. Had he been supported by his people at home, he could have defied the Papal ally, Philip of France, with greater confidence. But he was not secure; on the contrary, he had many enemies; he knew it well enough, for he had made them for himself by his grasping taxation and his vicious life. Innocent's threat cowed him, and he gave way. Submission was not made easy for him. He had to swear fealty to the Pope, to pay a yearly tribute of 1000

marks, and to accept England as a papal fief. These terms, England seemingly degrading to modern minds but probably not as a papal fief (1213) considered very disgraceful at the time, were accepted by John, and may even in part have been suggested by him. That there were other kingdoms, such as Sicily and Aragon, whose kings were held in similar vassalage to the Pope without suffering much inconvenience, is no excuse for John. He opened still wider the door which let in Papal taxation and interference.

Meantime, having made his peace with the Pope, he might have expected to be free from Philip. Indeed, the Pope ordered Philip to desist from his enterprise. But it was easier to stir hatred than to allay it. John wished to follow up a successful raid on the French fleet at Damme John attacks France by an invasion of France, but his barons would not follow. Foiled here, he prepared a great league against Philip. He enlisted the Emperor Otto and the Count of Flanders. He League against Philip himself went to stir up Poitou, leaving an English force under the Earl of Salisbury to aid the allies. The plan was well laid. John's raid was to draw Philip into the west and leave Paris open on the north-east to a blow from the German allies; but, as in all such complex schemes, accurate co-operation was necessary to success. John was for once in a way too punctual—so prompt that Philip was able to dispose of him and return to the eastern part of his kingdom while the emperor dawdled over the marriage festivities of his daughter. At length the armies John and his allies stumbled on each other at Bouvines (1214), and a hard-fought action, in which the French levies on foot did their part bravely side by side with the horsemen, ended in the complete overthrow of the allies. Salisbury and the Count of Flanders remained prisoners in Philip's hands, and John was driven to retire to England, his last hopes of recovering a Continental power, and so getting relief from his English troubles, at an end. John and his allies defeated at Bouvines (1214)



## 4. MAGNA CARTA

For indeed troubles had gathered fast. The party of the barons had closed its ranks; it had been joined by the towns-  
 Trouble in Eng-  
 land men; it had found a policy and a leader. The policy was to compel the King to acknowledge formally the rights of his subjects and to amend their grievances. The leader was Stephen Langton, and the steps in which he guided his party are memorable. In 1213 there met at *St. Albans* an assembly, including not only barons, but also the reeves and four villeins from each royal manor, in which the grievances of the realm were discussed. A few weeks later Langton read to the barons at St. Paul's the Charter of Liberties granted by Henry I, and it was agreed that a similar charter should be imposed on John. When John returned to England after the battle of Bouvines, he did his best to strengthen himself against the barons. He imported mercenaries, implored the help of the Pope, and even took the Crusader's vow in order that anyone attacking him might come under the ban of the Church. But the barons were too strong for him; even his own friends deserted him; and at *Runnymede*, on 15th June, 1215, he reluctantly sealed the Great Charter. (*Note 21.*)

Of the sixty-three clauses, four — the twelfth, the fourteenth, the thirty-ninth, and the fortieth — have been of lasting importance in the story of our Constitution. The twelfth provides that no scutage or aid, saving only the three regular feudal aids,<sup>1</sup> shall be imposed, save by the "common council of the realm"<sup>2</sup>; and the fourteenth lays down that this "council" is to consist of an assembly to which archbishops, bishops, earls, and greater barons were to be summoned, each by a separate writ, and other tenants-in-chief by a writ directed to the sheriff of the county. These two clauses, which, to begin with, only restricted the king from

<sup>1</sup> To knight the king's son, to marry his daughter, or to ransom his person.

<sup>2</sup> In the reissue of the Charter in 1217 it was provided that scutage should be levied as it was under Henry II.



imposing one kind of tax upon one class of persons — namely, tenants-in-chief — have been used as the foundation of the great principle that the king cannot levy any tax without the consent of Parliament. Further, the *thirty-ninth* and *fortieth* clauses, which run: “No free man shall be taken or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any way destroyed; nor will we go upon him, nor will we send upon him, unless by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land”, and “To none will we sell, to none will we deny or delay, right or justice”, have been enlarged and widened to provide for the liberty of the subject, the right of trial by jury, equality of all before the law, and the supremacy of the law over kings, lords, and commons alike. Over and over again these clauses have been invoked against the Crown. This was especially the case in the struggle between King and Parliament in the seventeenth century. For when the Five Knights were imprisoned by King Charles for refusing to contribute to a forced loan, and again, when John Hampden would not pay ship money, it was to the Great Charter that they appealed.

Yet though these clauses, which later ages interpreted as laying down wide principles restraining the powers of all kings, have emerged in the course of time as being the most valuable provisions in the Charter, and the rest have sunk into obscurity as the circumstances which called for them passed away, it must not be forgotten that what we are now apt to leave on one side was in its day the most important. In the main the Great Charter was a bond between a feudal king and feudal barons; it runs on feudal lines. The four great clauses are, we have seen, mainly feudal. Fourteen clauses lay down feudal obligations about wardships, marriages, escheats, and services; nine restrain the Crown from exacting money by the abuse of privileges, such as the right of purveyance, or by the increasing of established duties; fourteen are concerned with the better regulation of the king's courts; add to these the thirteen clauses which

Control of  
Taxation

Justice

Trial by  
juryMagna  
Carta as a  
feudal  
documentFeudal  
clauses

applied only to the need of binding John for the time, and we have three-quarters of the whole. But the remainder includes stipulations that the Church should be free and have all its rights, that London and other towns should enjoy their privileges, that merchants should come and go freely into the kingdom, and that the villein should not be deprived by fines of the implements by which he made his living. Though Magna Carta, being drawn up mainly by the barons, naturally bears most on what concerned them, it must not be described as entirely a class measure, for it was carefully laid down that rights which the feudal tenants-in-chief won from the king were also to hold good for the intermediate tenant against his superior.

Thus in the main there was little in the Charter intended to be new, since it aimed at restoring customs which John had broken. In reality it became one of the great starting-points of our national liberties.

The Charter was sealed; the next thing was to get it observed. John gave his promise, because at the time there was nothing else for him to do; he gave it the more readily, because from the first he had not the slightest intention of keeping it. When he learnt of the twenty-five barons who were to enforce it on him, he cried out furiously, "They have given me twenty-five over-kings". He cast about for means to break his word. He gathered a party of barons, hired more mercenaries, and made ready for war. The Pope, as overlord of England, annulled the Charter and forbade its observance, under penalty of excommunication. The King's enemies turned for help to France. They even offered the crown to Louis, son of Philip Augustus. Louis landed with a French force. For nearly a year civil war raged up and down England, till John fell suddenly ill and died at Newark. His opportune death was the only good gift he ever bestowed on his country. Even his abilities were always turned to evil ends. No man was a greater master in the art of misusing his talents.

The  
Church

Towns

The  
struggle  
over the  
Charter

Death of  
John  
(1216)

## NOTES ON PERIOD TWO (1066-1216)

### RULERS OF ENGLAND

WILLIAM I (1066-1087)  
WILLIAM II (1087-1100)  
HENRY I (1100-1135)  
STEPHEN (1135-1154)  
HENRY II (1154-1189)  
RICHARD I (1189-1199)  
JOHN (1199-1216)

### RULERS OF SCOTLAND

MALCOLM III (CANMORE) (1057-1093)  
DONALD BANE (1093-1094)  
DUNCAN II (1094)  
DONALD BANE (1094-1097)  
EDGAR (1097-1107)  
ALEXANDER I (1107-1124)  
DAVID I (1124-1153)  
MALCOLM IV (1153-1165)  
WILLIAM THE LION (1165-1214)  
ALEXANDER II (1214-1249)

### IMPORTANT FOREIGN RULERS

POPES: GREGORY VII ("Hildebrand") (1073-1085)  
INNOCENT III (1198-1216)

EMPERORS: HENRY IV (1056-1106)  
HENRY V (1106-1125)  
FREDERICK I ("Barbarossa") (1152-1190)  
FREDERICK II (1215-1250)

FRANCE: PHILIP II (1180-1223)

## NOTE 9.—ENGLAND AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST

1. William succeeded in invading England because Harold was away fighting in the north; after Hastings the English did not unite against him; and the Witan offered him the crown. William's method of warfare was more up to date than those of the English, and his horsemen could ride down the English archers.
2. He established his power:
  - (a) By confiscating the lands of those who fought against him.
  - (b) By suppressing the risings against him one by one as they occurred, for the English never took united action.
  - (c) By developing the *Feudal System*.
  - (d) By using the English against his own rebellious barons.

## NOTE 10.—THE FEUDAL SYSTEM IN ENGLAND

1. William developed what had already existed. He regularized land tenure and based it on military service.
2. He strengthened the power of the Crown by the *Oath of Salisbury* (1086), and by scattering the estates of the barons.
3. The *manorial* system was developed.

Cultivation of land under the manorial system was under the "open field" system; the lord owned the domain; the tenants held their land in return for performing service. People on the manor included freemen and villeins. Manorial courts administered justice. The Conquest depressed some of the peasants into lower grades, but the manor had existed before the Conquest, as *Domesday Book* shows.

## NOTE 11.—RANULF FLAMBARD

He was one of the great officials—the Justiciar, who represented the King when he was absent from the kingdom. He exacted money from the barons, taking for the King all profits from minors' estates and heiresses' marriages. Kept revenues of vacant bishoprics for the Crown. Hated by all, and his exactions led the great barons to revolt. William defeated the rebels. Flambard was imprisoned when Henry I came to the throne, but later was pardoned.

## NOTE 12.—POLICY OF HENRY I (1100–1135) TOWARDS THE BARONS AND THE ENGLISH

1. **The Barons.**
  - (a) Suppressed over-powerful barons (Robert of Bellême).
  - (b) Checked the powers of the barons' manorial courts.
  - (c) Sent round justices in eyre (i.e. travelling) to take the King's justice to all parts of the country.
  - (d) Sent barons of the exchequer also round the country to administer taxation.
  - (e) Developed the King's Council to help in advising the King.

## 2. The English.

- (a) Henry married the heiress of the old line of English kings (Matilda).
- (b) He imprisoned William Rufus' oppressive Justiciar and promised reforms.
- (c) He issued a *Charter of Liberties* swearing to keep all the ancient laws of the English. This proved a model for later charters.
- (a) He did all he could to win over the native English and use them as a counterweight to the Norman barons.

## NOTE 13. — THE CHURCH UNDER THE NORMANS

1. **William I.** William refused to do homage to the Pope for England, and refused to allow Papal decrees to be enforced without his permission. He constrained the Church to have its own courts to try all "clerks".

*Lanfranc* made Archbishop of Canterbury by William, who "invested" his own bishops. *Lanfranc* carried out reforms in the Church, opposed the marriages of the clergy, and was a great organizer.

2. **William II.** Under *Flambard's* influence kept sees vacant, and after *Lanfranc's* death no archbishop was chosen for four years. Then in 1093 *Anselm* was made archbishop. He was a saint and a scholar and was compelled against his will to accept the office. He tried to check Rufus' evil ways, and was forced to leave the country.
3. **Henry I.** Henry recalled *Anselm*, but quarrelled with him because *Anselm* refused to recognize the "*investiture of bishops*" by the king. Quarrel was between Church and State, and was temporarily settled by the *Compromise of Bec* (1107). The bishops were to be chosen by the cathedral chapters (of clergy), and abbots by their monks. All were to receive *investiture* from the Church, but to do *homage* for their lands to the King.

## NOTE 14. — IMPORTANCE OF STEPHEN'S REIGN

The disorders of the reign were due to a *disputed succession*, and to a *weak king*. They show *feudalism at its worst*. The power of the barons led to complete anarchy. The Church was alienated and turned against the King. The need for reform became so clear that the ground was prepared for the rule of a strong king.

## NOTE 15. — SCOTLAND'S RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND UNDER THE NORMAN KINGS

Early history of Scotland shows the uniting of the various kingdoms (844-1034).

Malcolm Canmore married Margaret of Wessex, and she induced the Scottish Church to conform to Roman usages. Strong English influence in Scotland.

1. *David I* (1124-53) allied with Henry I of England. Henry had married David's sister, Matilda. On Henry's death, David took the part of Henry's daughter, the Empress Maud, and invaded England. Defeated by English at the *Battle of the Standard* (1138) but was given the northern counties to induce him to make peace.
2. Henry II wished to regain these districts, so attacked and captured *William the Lion* (1165-1214) at Alnwick. By *Treaty of Falaise* (1174) William did homage for Scotland to the English King.
3. Richard I sold this right to homage back to William the Lion, in return for money for the Crusade (1189).

#### NOTE 16.—HENRY II AND THE ANGEVIN EMPIRE

Henry II (1154-89) was the founder of an Empire, with great territories in France. He was King of *England*; overlord of *Scotland*; and he conquered *Ireland*. From his father, Geoffrey of Anjou, he inherited *Anjou, Maine, and Touraine*. He had also inherited the Duchy of *Normandy* which his mother, Maud, had claimed, but which his father had been obliged to conquer for him. He married Eleanor of Aquitaine, and through her acquired *Aquitaine* (which included *Gascony*) and *Poitou, Toulouse, Saintonge, and Limousin*. In addition, one of his sons married the heiress of *Brittany*.

#### NOTE 17.—HOW HENRY II RESTORED ORDER IN ENGLAND

1. Took back all Crown lands which had been granted away by Stephen.
2. Pulled down the castles which the barons had fortified.
3. Expelled the mercenary soldiers brought in during the civil war.

He then set to work to introduce various *reforms*:

1. He built up an army by developing *scutage*, a tax on each "Knight's fee", and paying a permanent force, which was the King's army, and not a feudal host. He also revived the Saxon fyrd, or national militia, and armed them under the *Assize of Arms*.
2. He developed the system of *justices in eyre* to the local courts, to administer royal justice.
3. By the *Assize of Clarendon* (1166) the justices were to use juries to "present" criminals for justice.

Henry forbade trial by battle, and substituted the use of a jury in *civil* cases. That is, in disputes over land a jury might be employed to state what the facts of the case were (The Grand Assize). He also laid down the use of a jury in *criminal* cases (*Assizes of Clarendon and Northampton*).



In his "Possessory" Assizes, certain civil cases called up from the local courts to the King's Central Court, by getting the King's writ. These dealt with the "possession" of land.

This use of juries, i.e. men sworn in to say what they knew, made the English familiar with the idea of representation in local government. The jury was also used in the Assize of Arms to say what arms each freeman could afford, and later in the assessing of the taxes to raise the ransom of Richard I. Thus the English were accustomed to choose representatives to fulfil all sorts of duties laid on the community by the King, and later the principle was developed into choosing representatives to act for the nation.

#### NOTE 18.—HENRY II AND THE CHURCH

Quarrel with the Church had formerly been over lay investiture, now it turned on the special courts to try clerics. *Becket* led the Church's opposition to the King.

1. In 1164 the *Constitutions of Clarendon* were drawn up at the King's orders. They laid down:

- (a) That the compromise over investitures should continue.
- (b) That clerks who had been tried in the ecclesiastical courts, and found guilty, should then be degraded from their orders and handed over to the King's courts for punishment.

Reason for the King's action lay in the fact that the term "clerks" included all sorts of men in "minor orders" — clerks in the King's Chancery, vergers, and beadles, etc. All these, if tried only in the ecclesiastical courts, would really escape punishment for crimes.

Reasons for Becket's opposition were that the Church held a "cleric" was punished by degradation from orders, and if handed over to King's Courts, would be punished twice. Becket wished to maintain the separation of "clerics" from other ranks. Becket refused to seal the Constitutions.

2. Henry *accused Becket of maladministration of funds*, and Becket appealed to Rome and fled the country. The other bishops supported Henry.
3. During six years Becket remained abroad. In 1170 a truce was made, and Becket prepared to return. But Henry, who wished to make certain there was no disputed succession at his death, had his *eldest son crowned* as King. The coronation was performed by the Archbishop of York, and the Bishop of London. Becket, who claimed he alone should perform the act, on his return excommunicated these two. Henry's rage led to the *murder of Becket* (1170).
4. *Result of Becket's death*. He was hailed as a martyr. Henry had to give way, and give up his claim to try criminous clerks in the King's court. "Benefit of clergy" continued.

## NOTE 19. — THE CRUSADES

Jerusalem had been taken by the Arabs in 635, but they did not interfere with the Christian pilgrims.

1. In 1076 the Turks took Jerusalem, and began to persecute the Christians. In 1095 Pope Urban II preached the first *Crusade*, a war for the restoration of Jerusalem to the Christians. The countries of Europe all joined in this war, and Robert of Normandy went. Jerusalem was captured from the Turks, and a "Latin Kingdom" set up. First Crusade lasted 1096-99.
2. A second *Crusade* (1147), in Stephen's reign, was undertaken by France and the Emperor to strengthen the Kingdom of Jerusalem, but it did very little.
3. In 1187, *Saladin*, the great Moslem leader, took Jerusalem and most of the Crusaders' towns. A third *Crusade* was preached to restore Jerusalem. The Emperor set out, and the King of France and *Richard I of England*.

The Crusaders quarrelled amongst themselves, and quarrelled with the leaders of countries through which they passed.

Richard was victorious, but could not retake Jerusalem. Returning home he was shipwrecked and made a captive by the Duke of Austria. He had to pay a vast ransom, and do homage for England to the Emperor.

*Effect on England.* Many of the turbulent barons killed on Crusade; Richard sold homage of Scotland back to its King; trade stimulated by contracts with foreign countries; Richard's need for money made him sell charters to many towns.

## NOTE 20. — JOHN AND THE LOSS OF THE POWER OF THE CROWN

## 1. Loss of the Angevin empire.

Philip Augustus of France had:

- (a) Supported Henry II's sons in rebelling against him.
- (b) Quarrelled with Richard I in the Third Crusade.
- (c) Supported Prince Arthur against John.

He attacked Normandy, took Château Gaillard (1204); defeated John's armies and captured Normandy for France, as well as Touraine, Maine, Anjou, with part of Aquitaine (1204).

He then joined with the Pope in an attack on England, and led a "Crusade" against John. John made an alliance with the Emperor Otto, and with Flanders, and counter-attacked Philip in Flanders, but the allied troops were defeated by the French at *Bowines* (1214).

A French army under Prince Louis then invaded England, and was only driven out after a year's fighting, and after the death of John.

## 2. John's quarrel with the Church.

- (a) John quarrelled with his own clergy, and with the Pope, over the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury. Pope Innocent III set aside the candidates and appointed *Stephen Langton* (1205).
- (b) John refused to allow him to enter England, and the Pope placed England under an interdict (1208).
- (c) This not proving efficacious, the Pope preached a "crusade" and the French invaded England. As the barons did not support John, he came to terms with the Pope, and *agreed to hold England as a papal fief* (1213).

## 3. John's quarrel with the barons.

- (a) The barons alienated by John's failures in France.
- (b) Further opposition roused by his attitude towards the Church.
- (c) Barons refused to fight for him in Flanders.
- (d) Stephen Langton joined with the barons, and they demanded redress of the nation's grievances.
- (e) Magna Carta granted by John (1215).

## NOTE 21.—MAGNA CARTA (1215)

1. Has always been appealed to by the English as the foundation of their liberties. Actually it was largely a document meant to redress feudal grievances, but later generations were able to interpret some of its clauses in a very wide sense.

It was founded on the earlier charters (notably that of Henry I), which insisted that the King must observe the laws and customs of England.

2. The principal clauses which *later* proved so important were interpreted by the men who struggled against the Crown in a different sense from the original. Thus:

c. 12 and c. 14 said, "No scutage or aid shall be imposed on our Kingdom except with the consent of Common Council of our Kingdom". "And for the obtaining the Common Council we will cause to be summoned the archbishops, bishops, earls, and greater barons by letters under seal, and will cause to be summoned generally, through our sheriffs, all others who hold from us in chief".

This really meant that the King would call his tenants-in-chief to advise over taxation. It was later held to mean that the King *could not tax without the consent* of the representatives of the nation, i.e. of Parliament.

3. c. 39 said, "No free man shall be taken or imprisoned, save by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land". This meant that the tenants-in-chief must be tried not by the King's judges, but by other tenants-in-chief, and the "law of the land",

which applied to men of lesser rank, was to be the local choice as to trial by battle or ordeal. It was taken to mean that *no man could be imprisoned arbitrarily* without trial by jury.

c. 40 said, "To none will we sell, or deny, or delay, right or justice." This has been taken to mean the *equality of all before the law* and the supremacy of law over the King.

The clauses of the Charter are all jumbled up, and most of them deal with merely feudal details as to wards, dues to the lord, and so on. The barons were really trying to assert their rights against an oppressive King, but the fact that they *forced the King to grant a charter* of liberties meant that the nation had really successfully compelled the King to promise reform.

# TIME CHART FOR PERIOD TWO (1066-1216)

| Sovereign.               | Events in Britain.  | Date.                | Events Abroad.  | Date.                         |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| William I<br>(1066-1087) | Harrying of the North.<br>Invasion of Scotland by William I; Capture of Ely.  | 1069<br>1072         | Gregory VII (Hildebrand) Pope.<br>Turks take Jerusalem.<br>Founding of Carthusian order of monks.<br>First Crusade. Jerusalem captured from Turks.<br>Founding of Cistercian order of monks.<br>Godfrey of Bouillon, King of Jerusalem (refused title). | 1073<br>1076<br>1088          |
|                          | Oath of Salisbury; Completion of Domesday Book.<br>Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury.                                     | 1086<br>1093         |   | 1096<br>1098<br>1099-<br>1111 |
| Henry I<br>(1100-1135)   | Robert of Normandy invades England.<br>Battle of Tinchebrai.  | 1101<br>1106         |   | 1118                          |
|                          | Death of Prince William in White Ship.<br>David I King of Scotland.   | 1120<br>1124         |   | 1125                          |
| Stephen<br>(1135-1154)   | Scots invade England.<br>Battle of the Standard.<br>Empress Matilda invades England.<br>Empress Matilda leaves England. | 1135<br>1138<br>1139 | Second Crusade.   | 1147                          |
|                          | Henry, son of Matilda, invades England; Treaty of Wallingford.  | 1148                 | Frederick Barbarossa Emperor.   | 1152                          |
|                          |   | 1153                 | Death of St. Bernard.   | 1153                          |

| Sovereign.               | Events in Britain.   | Date.  | Events Abroad.   | Date.                            |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Henry II<br>(1154-1189)  | Thomas Becket Archbishop of Canterbury.<br>Constitutions of Clarendon.<br>University of Oxford probably founded.<br>Expedition of Strongbow to Ireland.<br>Murder of Becket.<br>Expedition of Henry II to Ireland.<br>Rebellion of Henry's sons.<br>William the Lion taken at Alnwick.<br>Saladin tithe raised | 1162<br>1164<br>1167<br>1169<br>1170<br>1171<br>1173<br>1174 | Saladin Sultan of Egypt.   | 1171                             |
| Richard I<br>(1189-1199) | Richard in captivity; Ransom raised.<br>Return of Richard to England.  | 1188<br>1193<br>1194   | Saladin takes Jerusalem.<br>Third Crusade.<br>Richard I taken prisoner by Leopold of Austria.<br>Innocent III Pope; Fourth Crusade.  | 1187<br>1189<br>1192<br>1198     |
| John (1199-1216)         | Loss of Normandy.<br>Papal interdict on England; Excommunication of John.<br>University of Cambridge founded.<br>John submits to Papacy.<br>Magna Carta.   | 1204<br>1207<br>1209<br>1213<br>1215                         | Crusaders attack and take Constantinople, seat of the Byzantine Empire.<br><br>The Children's Crusade.<br>Battle of Bouvines; John defeated.<br>Order of Dominicans founded. | 1203<br><br>1212<br>1214<br>1216 |



EXAMINATION QUESTIONS ON PERIOD TWO  
(1066-1216)

1. What were the chief effects of the Norman Conquest on English history? (LGS 1935)
2. Describe the opposition encountered by William of Normandy in (a) his conquest, (b) his settlement of England. (NUJB 1937)
3. What changes did the Norman conquest bring about in (a) political organization, (b) religious learning? (DL 1928)
4. Give some account of what is known as the manorial system, and describe the life of an English villein in the early Middle Ages. (CL '28)
5. Describe in general terms the mode of tillage under the open field system. What were the main drawbacks of that system? (CWB '32)
6. How did the Norman Conquest affect (a) the Church; (b) relations between England and the Continent? (NUJB 1932)
7. What measures did William I take to make his position secure? (LGS 1925; OL 1926; CL 1932)
8. Compare Lanfranc and Anselm as Archbishops of Canterbury. (LGS 1920; OC 1932)
9. Describe the relations between England and Scotland during the reigns of William II and Henry I and Stephen. (LGS 1921, 1928)
10. Describe and account for the worst features of the reigns of William II and Stephen. (NUJB 1931; OC 1932)
11. In what ways was the reign of Stephen important in English history? (LGS 1925)
12. Give some account of the judicial measures of Henry I. In what ways did they foreshadow those of Henry II? (LGS 1931)
13. By what means did Henry II restore order in England and prevent the recurrence of such disorders as had prevailed in Stephen's reign? (LM 1932, OL 1926)
14. Show (a) how Henry II obtained a large continental empire; (b) how most of that empire was lost in John's reign. (NUJB 1937)
15. What was the extent of the dominions over which Henry II ruled, and how did he secure them? (LM '31)

16. Describe the conflict between Henry II and Becket.  
(NUJB 1938)
17. Sketch the relations between king and clergy in England from the Norman Conquest to the death of Henry II.  
(LM 1926)
18. What was the condition of Ireland at the time of its conquest by Henry II? Outline the story of that conquest. (LGS 1922, 1920)
19. Describe the part played by Richard I in the Third Crusade.  
(OC '32)
20. Trace in outline the struggle (a) between Henry II and Becket; (b) between John and the Pope. What is the real importance of these contests between Church and State?  
(OL 1928)
21. Explain and discuss the results of the loss of Normandy under John.  
(LGS 1931)
22. How far was John responsible for his own misfortunes?  
(D 1931)
23. Give in outline the story of the events leading to the signing of the Great Charter of 1215, and show the importance of the Charter.  
(LGS 1927)
24. Give some account of the contents of Magna Carta and discuss the importance of this document in English history  
(LGS 1921; LM '26)
25. Indicate some of the effects of the Crusades upon English civilization.  
(LGS '32)

## PERIOD THREE

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR INSTITUTIONS AND THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR 1216-1399

#### CHAPTER 16

#### PARLIAMENT: THE GUARDIAN OF THE CHARTER

##### HENRY III (1216-1272)

##### 1. PARLIAMENT AND THE CHARTER

The period from 1215 to 1297 is sometimes spoken of as the eighty years' struggle over the Charter. In the former year John sealed it; in the latter year Edward I solemnly confirmed and enlarged it in the *Confirmation of the Charters*. But in the same eighty years grew up a guardian of the Charter who watched over it far more jealously than the committee of "twenty-five over-kings" against whom John had railed. This was Parliament, and more particularly the representatives of the "king's faithful Commons", who have built up their power, starting from the foundation laid in the Charter, that the king could not obtain money save by the common council of the realm. Before granting a supply, Parliament would demand the redress of some grievance, or the fulfilment of some promise, and first it always turned to the due observance of the Great Charter.

1215-97.  
Magna  
Carta.  
Confirmation  
of the  
Charters

No less than thirty-seven times have our kings been called on solemnly to confirm it.

Parliament a representative governing body

In following the reign of Henry III we must look for signs of the growth of Parliament. And we must recognize what it is that we seek. It is not merely the existence of an assembly which governed or took a share in the Government; such an assembly already existed in the "Council" mentioned in the twelfth article of Magna Carta, and of course it was far older. All English kings, even back into remote Saxon days, had a council whose advice they asked, if they did not always take it. The Saxon Witan in theory gave its consent to the king's laws and taxes, approved the appointment of his ministers, even on occasion could elect or depose a king. When the Normans succeeded, the substance of the Witan's powers came to the King's Court or Council — the Curia Regis — that body of many shapes and many functions, whose nature has been already explained. But both the Witan, where the qualification was nominally wisdom, and the Curia Regis, whose members held land direct from the king, differed essentially from Parliament. They were to a certain extent governing assemblies, and so is Parliament. But Parliament is more; it is a *representative* governing assembly. Both Witan and Curia Regis were class bodies; Parliament is a national body.

What is to be sought, then, is the alloy of representatives with the governing assembly.

Parliament and the Charter

Put generally, the chief thing in the history of England during the thirteenth century is the safeguarding and enlarging of the Great Charter under the hands of an assembly which itself developed into a new shape, under a new name, that of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> It should not be supposed

<sup>1</sup> More particularly this may be illustrated from the words of the Charter itself. The 12th clause says, "*Nullum scutagium vel auxilium ponatur in regno nostro nisi per commune consilium regni nostri.*" "No scutage or aid shall be placed on the realm, save by the common consent of the realm." The progress was in two ways. First, to extend the words "*Nullum scutagium vel auxilium*" into the much wider general principle "no tax of any sort"; secondly, to arrive at a methodical and satisfactory way of obtaining this "*commune consilium regni*", namely, in Parliament.

that these wide ideas occurred to the minds of the barons who were fighting for their Charter against King John. On the contrary, no sooner was John dead than the party who took the side of his son Henry III under the leadership of William Marshall, *Earl of Pembroke*, and *Hubert de Burgh*, reissued the Charter, but carefully left out what is nowadays held to be the gist of it, namely, these 12th and 14th clauses, the very two on which the future power of Parliament against the Crown was to be founded. It is clear that in 1216 they were not felt to be necessary; perhaps not even popular. They would hamper a regency as much as a king.

Rule of  
National  
party.  
Reissue of  
Charter  
(without  
clauses 12  
and 14)

## 2. MINORITY OF HENRY III

John's death left the kingdom torn with civil war. The barons had invited Louis and his Frenchmen into the realm to help them against their tyrant; now that the tyrant was dead, they wished to be rid of the French. Louis, however, would not withdraw. He claimed the Crown for himself. The barons, however, soon deserted him, and drew together in the cause of the young Henry. The French were defeated by Pembroke in a desperate fight in the streets of Lincoln; while in the battle of Dover Hubert de Burgh destroyed a French fleet bringing reinforcements under Eustace the Monk. These two blows made Louis give up hope. In a few weeks peace was signed, and the French left the country.

Defeat of  
the  
French  
at the Fair  
of Lincoln

Henry III succeeded to the throne at the age of nine, and was therefore at first too young to influence the Government. The first period of his reign lasts till 1232, and reflects the ideas of his ministers; in the second, the king's own weak, untrustworthy character and his foolish and extravagant policy gave an opening to a set of worthless favourites, relations, and hangers-on at court; the third, beginning about 1253, is a period of turmoil caused by the efforts of the barons to obtain better government, chiefly under the leadership of Simon de Montfort. Of these, the

Faults of  
Henry III

first two may be dismissed somewhat shortly. The third calls for more notice.

The Earl of Pembroke died in 1219, and the business of being regent in fact, though not in name, passed to *Hubert de Burgh*. Hubert governed well: his chief task was to crush the few remaining adherents of John's party. Falkes de Bréauté may fairly stand as a type of them, a refugee from Normandy whom John had used to captain his mercenaries, and had rewarded with estates, castles, and sheriffdoms. His chief stronghold was Bedford Castle, where his brother had the impudence to seize and imprison one of the king's justices. Hubert attacked the castle, forced the first two lines of walls, and undermined the keep, so that part of the wall fell. Eighty of the defenders were hanged, and Falkes himself was driven into exile. Such sharp justice terrified smaller offenders into submission.

Unfortunately, when Henry came of age, in 1227, he showed no gratitude to de Burgh. The death of the great Archbishop Stephen Langton in 1228 robbed the Justiciar of a good friend; and in 1232 Henry dismissed him, and seized his estates. Hubert was the last great Justiciar.

### 3. MISRULE OF HENRY III

There followed a long period of bad government. The King was poor, since Richard I had sold, and John had given away, many royal estates, and it was no longer easy to raise money by scutages and aids; but though poor he was far from sparing. His chief minister, Peter des Roches, a Poitevin, pushed his relations and foreign friends into every office and sheriffdom that fell vacant; when Peter fell into disgrace there came a fresh incursion of foreigners with Henry's wife, Eleanor of Provence. One uncle became an archbishop, a second a bishop, a third an earl. They naturally gave all they could to their own countrymen. Provençals proved every whit as greedy as Poitevins, and the

whole country grew exasperated at Henry and the foreigners who filled the court. Then Henry engaged in an inglorious war with France and lost the battle of *Taillebourg* or Saintes, in which he narrowly escaped capture. Undeterred by this failure he meddled in the quarrel between the Papacy and the descendants of Frederick II. He weakly accepted the offer of the throne of *Naples and Sicily* for his younger son, *Edmund*, and as a result had cast on him the task of paying for the war which the Pope was waging. Edmund never got the throne, and a more purposeless waste of money could hardly be imagined. (*Note 22.*)

The  
battle of  
Taille-  
bourg  
(1242)

Ambition  
of Henry  
for his  
sons

Irritated by the foreigners, provoked by the incompetent and extravagant king, the barons demanded that proper officials should be chosen and the charters kept. Henry gave plenty of promises, but never kept them. So, till a leader could be found on the baronial side, nothing could be done. With the appearance of Simon de Montfort, however, we pass to the third and important period of the reign.

#### 4. SIMON DE MONTFORT

*Simon de Montfort*, Earl of Leicester, was the son of the de Montfort who had led the Crusade against the Albigenses in the south of France. He had married Henry's sister, Eleanor, but was disliked at Court and had spent most of his life abroad. His chief work had been as Seneschal of Gascony to try to keep the Gascon nobles in order. He set about this resolutely, and so unpopular did his firmness make him, that the Gascons complained. Henry would not support him, and Simon resigned. In 1257 he came to England. Nine years were destined to see him rise to a position above the king, then even more suddenly fall in complete ruin; and yet leave a name that ranks among the greatest in English constitutional history.

Simon's  
connec-  
tion with  
Henry III

Simon  
and  
Gascony

Being himself a foreigner, and related by marriage to Henry III, it seems at first sight strange that he should



Leader of  
barons in  
England

come to lead the national baronial party against the Court and the foreigners. But though he was brother-in-law to the King, the King and his family looked down on him; and it was hatred to the Queen's Provençal relations that drove him into the national ranks. His own nature, serious, masterful, and pious, soon secured him the foremost place.

The  
Council of  
Twenty-  
four  
(1258)

At Easter, 1258, when Parliament met at London, Henry wanted money. The barons, who had come armed, demanded that, before any grants were made, all foreigners should be banished and a commission of reform set up. Henry had to agree and a Council of Twenty-four<sup>1</sup> was appointed. It adjourned to Oxford and there drew up a

Provisions  
of Oxford

new scheme of government known as the *Provisions of Oxford*. The main point was the establishment of a permanent council of fifteen to supervise the government, check illegal exactions, restore justice, and recover the royal castles: they were, in case of need, to confer with another council of twelve, chosen by the barons. The leaders in the fifteen were Simon de Montfort and Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester.

These leaders, however, did not agree; for a time the quarrel was smothered by the death of Gloucester, but in the meantime Henry had once more broken his promises. Following the precedent of his father he persuaded the Pope to absolve him of his oath, and got the question of whether he was bound by the Provisions of Oxford referred to Louis IX. Louis was probably the most virtuous king who ever sat on a throne, but he was certain to look on things from a king's point of view. By the *Mise of Amiens* he decided that Henry might do as he liked, provided he violated "no royal charter or praiseworthy custom". Henry had shown in the past that he did not care for either.

The Mise  
of  
Amiens  
(1264)

Civil  
war

Nothing was left but to try force. Simon gathered the barons to his standard, and was backed by the south. Henry's chief supporters came from the marches and the north.

<sup>1</sup> Often wrongly called the "Mad Parliament".

The armies met at Lewes, Simon attacking the town. The Londoners in his army were scattered by Henry's most capable leader, his son Edward. But Edward, then only twenty-four, had not yet become the cool, wary commander who was in future years to attack Scotland. Angered by the fact that these citizens of London had insulted his mother, he pursued his enemies furiously, without thinking of the rest of the battle. While he was away, Simon in the centre overthrew the royal forces and captured the King. Henry had to submit, to accept once more the Provisions of Oxford, and to hand over Edward as a hostage.

**Battle of  
Lewes  
(1264)**

**Victory of  
Simon**

So far there had been nothing to mark off Simon from the rest of the large class of nobles who from time to time had taken arms against their sovereign. He had employed the ordinary baronial remedy for misgovernment, namely rebellion. Though Simon bore a higher character, had a better cause, and had met with greater success than was usual, these are only differences of degree, and not of kind. In essence he was a rebel, and the case is not altered by the fact that he was an abnormally virtuous one. His next step, however, was to lift him far above any other well-meaning rebellious baron, and mark in him that combination of theory with practice, that union of wisdom and opportunity, that belongs only to the statesman.

**Simon and  
Parliament**

The truth was that he had few supporters among the barons. For a time the young Earl of Gloucester had stood by him, but he was growing lukewarm. Many other barons were inclined to favour the King again now that he had accepted the Provisions. Simon's real strength lay in the middle classes, especially in the towns. The Church, too, favoured him. Hence he sought a device whereby he could make this popular support tell, and so was the founder of what became the House of Commons.

**Simon de  
Montfort's  
new policy**

Both in Saxon and Norman institutions the common custom of using *representatives* has been already remarked. Representatives of hundreds and boroughs sat in the Shire

**Representatives**

courts; representatives from the townships gave evidence before the Domesday commissioners; and, older than these, the Councils of the Church had been attended by representatives from each diocese. In summoning representatives to his House of Commons, Simon was following a precedent already familiar to the nation and to the Church. Moreover, as has been seen, knights of the shire had attended Langton's Council at St. Albans in 1213; and in 1254, 1261, and 1264, knights had been chosen by each county to consider in the Great Council what aid they were willing to pay. But Simon went further. To his Parliament of 1265 he summoned not only two knights from each shire, but two citizens and two burgesses to represent certain cities and boroughs.

The  
Parliament  
of 1265

Origin  
of the  
House of  
Commons

The importance of this step is not diminished by the fact that it was plainly a partisan measure. Simon was popular in the towns; accordingly he invited representatives from certain specified towns, well knowing that they would support him. It is true that while he enlarged the popular part of his Parliament, he restricted the upper part. Of the fifty greater barons, only his friends, some twenty-three in all, were summoned. Nor indeed did the Parliament do anything of note. Its greatness rests not on what it did, but on what it was. It gave a starting-point from which has grown our House of Commons. So long as those who attended the Council, or Parliament — call it by what name we may — were all either barons or knights of the shire, there was only one class represented — the class of landholders. The citizens and burgesses, however, represented the traders. And although in Simon's day, and for long after, landholders and traders sat together, yet the knights of the shire speedily grew accustomed to act with the men from the towns, thus forming a party of the "Commons" as distinct from the greater barons, the "Lords". This union of smaller landowners with the citizens and burgesses, the junction in one party of representatives from towns and

counties, is a distinguishing mark of our Parliament. France, Spain, and the Empire also, at one time or another, had Estates or Diets to which representatives of different classes came, but each acted by itself, for itself; each "Estate" dealt with its own affairs only. And whereas these institutions all decayed, our Parliament grew stronger and stronger. Its most vigorous part is the House of Commons, and much of its vitality is due to the fact that it has always been a national body and not divided into "Estates". The beginning of this was Simon de Montfort's work.

Yet after all it was the work of a rebel, and no time was spared him to foster it. The quarrels between him and the young Gloucester grew keener. Prince Edward contrived to escape, and set himself to overthrow Simon. He made friends with Gloucester, and promised that he would expel the foreigners and rule according to law; and Edward, unlike his father, was known to keep his promises. Thus deprived of allies, Simon had only his sons and vassals to support him. While he was struggling to raise men in Wales, Edward, with a much larger force, got between him and his castle of Kenilworth, where his second son was gathering troops. Simon tried to slip back to join his son, but Edward surprised and cut to pieces the younger de Montfort's army at Kenilworth, and then, turning on Earl Simon, hemmed him in at *Evesham*; on three sides lay the river Avon; the only bridge was guarded; on the north, Edward's men swarmed in to the attack. Simon saw that he was lost. "God have mercy on our souls," cried he, "for our bodies are the prince's." He died fighting bravely against overwhelming odds.

Fall of  
Simon.  
Battles of  
Kenil-  
worth and  
Evesham  
(1265)

Since Simon's cause rested on himself alone we might suppose that with his death his work too would perish: that the idea of a Parliament, extended so as to embrace town as well as county, would be looked on as the dangerous device of a rebel, and accordingly be left alone for the future. It is true that his party was destroyed; in the course

Import-  
ance of  
Simon de  
Montfort

of the next two years his sons were overcome, and the royal cause became again supreme. But it was Edward who had won and not Henry; Simon had at least secured this, that there was no return to the thriftless, faithless, purposeless rule of Henry III's earlier years. Simon de Montfort died a rebel with arms in his hand. Yet none the less he was a patriot and a remarkable statesman — remarkable not merely in the character of his work, but in the high-minded nature that enabled him to identify himself with a great cause. Like Stephen Langton he raised a baronial party from partisanship to patriotism. Just as Stephen Langton, originally forced on John by the power of the Pope, turned at the call of duty against the Papacy when the Papacy lent its support to the worthless King John, so Simon, himself a foreigner and a kinsman of the King, took arms against the King and his foreign favourites for the sake of good government. He is one example out of the many which history offers of an alien to whom England owes much.

## CHAPTER 17

### EDWARD I (1272-1307)

#### 1. EDWARD I AND PARLIAMENT

Edward's  
respect  
for law

For years before his accession to the throne Edward had given proof of vigour and unusual ability. As a young man he had been employed in ruling the most turbulent parts of his father's realm, Gascony and the Marches of Wales. The skill with which he had crushed Simon de Montfort has been already noted. Yet, though masterful by nature, he showed no wish to become a despot. On the contrary, he aimed at governing strictly by law and making others obey what he respected himself. Thus he came to complete what Simon de Montfort had begun, namely, the establishment of the power of Parliament. (*Note 23.*)

It might be supposed that the man who had been Simon's

most capable foe, who had beaten his armies and brought about his death, would have been the last person to carry on as king the work Simon had begun as a rebel. We might think that in Edward's eyes the representing of the Commons would be hateful — a factious plan intended to harass the king. It was not so. Edward's legal turn of mind naturally brought him to develop Parliament till it should be truly representative of all classes.

Edward  
and  
Simon's  
work

Almost at once he repeated Simon's plan. He summoned to his Parliament of 1275 burghers and citizens from the towns, as well as knights of the shire; but this practice did not at once become the rule. Later again the knights alone were summoned, and sometimes no representatives at all of the "Commons" were sent for, Parliament then returning to its original shape — the "Great Council" of magnates. At times again the King got grants direct from representatives of the merchants, without calling the others. Still, the principle that the assent of all was needed both to statutes and to grants of money was gradually becoming more settled.

Parlia-  
mentary  
experi-  
ments  
(1272-95)

But in the middle of these Parliamentary experiments Edward suddenly found himself involved in serious difficulties abroad. A later chapter gives the story of his dealings with the Scots and the Welsh. All that need be said here is that in the year 1295 Scotland was in revolt; France, irritated by a fierce fight between English and Norman shipmen, in which the Normans were worsted, had joined in alliance with the Scots and was invading Gascony; three revolts had broken out in Wales. Edward needed money to deal with three separate wars at once; that alone would have compelled him to summon a Parliament. But he seems to have felt that in a time of such danger to the nation he must take the nation into his confidence in a peculiarly thorough fashion. So he gathered his famous Parliament of 1295, summoning to it the earls and greater barons, the archbishops, bishops, and mitred abbots, two knights from each shire, two citizens and burgesses from each city and



**Model Parliament (1295)** borough. As this Parliament was summoned by a king it has deserved its name of the "*Model Parliament*", for it has served as a model for all subsequent Parliaments. Indeed, in one sense, no other Parliament has ever so completely represented all classes, for Edward also caused the priors of the cathedrals, the archdeacons, and representatives of the clergy of each cathedral and each diocese to be summoned also. Thus the "three estates" of the realm, clergy, nobility, and commons, all figured in it fully represented. It was only because the churchmen preferred to remain a class apart, and to make their own grants of money in their own assembly ("convocation"), that their representatives had no place in the Parliament in the following century.

**Tenants-in-chief, knights of the shire, burgesses**

**The clergy**

**National assembly** The "Model Parliament" did not disappoint Edward's hopes. Clergy, barons, and commons alike voted him money. Yet just as with Simon's assembly, the Model Parliament of 1295 was important rather for what it was than for what it did. By its existence it established a precedent. "Parliament" could no longer be a class body, representative merely of the great barons and bishops, or of the landowners; henceforth it was national. Only thirty years had passed, and the device of a rebel baron had been accepted as the deliberate policy of a king.

**Edward's troubles** Edward's troubles did not end, however, with the holding of the Model Parliament. Money had been voted, but it took time to collect it, and Edward, at war with Scots, Welsh, and Frenchmen, was in a desperate hurry for supplies. To make things worse, Pope Boniface VIII, who wished to force Edward and Philip IV, King of France, to make peace, determined to cut off the supplies of money which they drew from the clergy in their realms. He therefore issued a bull known as "*Clericis Laicos*", forbidding all payments "from the clergy to the laity" without his sanction. Philip forbade the export of money from France — that was his way of meeting the situation.

**The papacy**

**"Clericis Laicos"**



As a matter of fact both kings treated the bull as a vexatious piece of papal interference. Edward I let it be understood that if the clergy refused to pay the grant they had promised, he would treat them as outlaws; that is to say, the law of England would give them no rights against anyone who defrauded or wronged them. Still, the result was to leave Edward in even greater straits for money, and, what was worse, his barons refused to go to the war in France. They were bound, they admitted, to accompany him; but they understood their obligation to "accompany" in the narrowest sense: they declared they would not go to Gascony while he went to Flanders. The Constable Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, and the Marshal Bohun, Earl of Hereford, were the ringleaders. "By God, Sir Earl," said Edward to the Constable in a ferocious pun, "thou shalt go or hang." "By God, Sir King," was the cool reply, "I will neither go nor hang." The two earls went home and fifteen hundred knights with them, and Edward, now at his wits' end for money and men, seized the wool from the merchants in the ports, ordered the courtiers to find him provisions, and soon after sailed for Flanders.

Outlawry  
of clergy

Barons  
and the  
war

Refusal of  
Bigod and  
Bohun to  
serve  
abroad

No sooner was he out of the kingdom than the two earls appeared in London, and forbade the King's Council to collect any of the moneys irregularly levied on wool. A Parliament was hastily summoned, and the earls demanded that the Great Charter should be solemnly confirmed, with the addition of a clause that the King was not to take "such manner of aids or prises save by the common assent of the realm"; that the "evil tax" (the maltôte) on wool was to be given up; and that for the future the King and his heirs would not take anything without the common consent and goodwill of the *commonalty of the realm*, save only the ancient "custom" on wool, skin, and leather already granted. The Council of Regency gave their promise to this, and the King afterwards confirmed their promise.

Parliament  
and the  
king

Confirmatio  
Cartarum  
(1297)

This "*Confirmation of the Charters*" had very great im-

portance. For, the promise not to tax goods without the consent of the "commonalty", was later to be interpreted as giving Parliament control over indirect taxation. This ultimately would mean Parliamentary control of finance, and also, since "he who pays the piper calls the tune", of government.

Thus the years 1295 and 1297 saw the fulfilment of what had been foreshadowed eighty-two years before; the year 1213 saw the first appearance of representatives of the Commons at a Great Council; 1295 saw the principle established as a model. Magna Carta was sealed in 1215: its most important principles were reasserted and agreed to in the most solemn way in the Confirmation of the Charters of 1297. The struggle over the Charter had lasted eighty years; it had ended in the victory of the nation over the king, and in the creation of a body whose chief duty was to watch over the Charter, namely Parliament. Yet it is noteworthy that the victory was won, as it was in 1215, by a rebellious gathering of barons. Parliament had not yet the vigour to stand for itself. In extremity the old remedy against misgovernment, an armed rising, was once more used. But while the first monarch, John, only gave promises as a convenient way out of a temporary difficulty, Edward's word could be trusted. His motto was "Keep troth", and he took pride in maintaining it. Then, again, the Confirmation of the Charters went much further than Magna Carta. That had only forbidden the levy of illegal scutages or aids, and in word at any rate Edward had not broken it. Taxing wool was not taking either scutage or aid. Edward was within the letter of the law. But the barons went by the spirit of it. They read the Charter as laying down the restriction of all taxation (save the three regular feudal aids) unless by the consent of the realm, and Edward, by yielding, admitted that they were right in their view.

The end of the thirteenth century, then, saw the making of Parliament, the germ of a *representative governing* as-

Develop-  
ment of  
powers of  
Parlia-  
ment

Step  
forward  
from  
Magna  
Carta

sembly. Yet it is going too far to think of Plantagenet parliaments as exactly like the busy, inquisitive, masterful body of to-day. In the first place, Lords and Commons still sat together; the separation between the two houses did not come till Edward II's day. Secondly, Parliament had no regular time for being summoned; that depended on the king. Thirdly, it had only a very indirect control over the king and his ministers; the only way it could make its power felt was by withholding supplies.<sup>1</sup> It could not make laws; what it did was to petition the king, and if he gave assent to its petitions with the words, *Le Roi le veut*, they became statutes; if, however, the king replied, *Le Roi s'avisera*,<sup>2</sup> the petition might be altered or dropped. It could not make ministers, though by degrees it found a cumbrous way of getting rid of exceptionally bad ministers by *impeaching*<sup>3</sup> them. It was not much consulted about affairs of state. Speaking generally, it had little force of its own. If the king smiled on it, it grew strong and even pugnacious; if

Limitations  
of Parlia-  
ment

<sup>1</sup> Even so, much of the royal revenue was still beyond its control. Royal revenue at this time, and for long years after, may be broadly divided into two kinds, ordinary and exceptional. The ordinary supply came mainly from the royal demesne — the estates, that is to say, that the king owned, like a feudal lord. The profits of these, coupled with the fines imposed for breaches of the law; the payments made by towns on the royal demesne, and the money paid by merchants trading into and out of the kingdom, sufficed for the normal expenditure of the king. Extra or unusual expenses, such as were demanded by war, were met by "taxation", properly so called. This was not at first annual, but exceptional. It did not always fall on the same class; it might be a grant of a tenth or a fifteenth on the lands of the barons, or it might fall on the lands of the Church, or it might be a tallage on towns or a prisage imposed on the wine or wool of the merchants. By taking now one and now another, a rough equality was maintained. But Parliament wished the king to "live of his own" (on his own income) and so far from wanting to withhold supplies, did not even desire to have the power to do so. It was only as the king's private wealth dwindled and the importance of taxation increased that Parliament got a more complete hold over him.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. "The king will see about it."

<sup>3</sup> Properly so called an *Impeachment* is a trial in which the House of Commons is the accuser and the Lords are the judges. It differs from an *Act of Attainder* (the other parliamentary way of getting rid of an unpopular or guilty minister), for an Act of Attainder is not a trial at all, but (as its name denotes) a *Bill* of Parliament declaring that such and such a person is guilty of whatever it may be and is to be put to death. This becomes an *Act* by passing the two Houses in the usual way, and on receiving the Royal Assent becomes part of the law of the land — though only applying to the person or persons named in it. The word Attainder means that the "blood" (the family) was "attainted", and therefore the man's goods and property were forfeited to the king.

the royal favour was turned away, it dwindled. Thus Parliament had little character of its own; it merely reflected the character of its patron for the time being. Members of the Commons did not covet membership, or come back year after year, as they do now, with the experience of many sessions. On the contrary, the task of being a member was rather looked on as a disagreeable and expensive duty, to be discharged once, and if possible eluded for the future. An assembly made up in the main of new and inexperienced men would naturally be timid. In a word, Parliament under the Plantagenets, and for many years after, was rather a weapon which could be wielded than a power which would act by itself. None the less the root of the matter was in it. It did represent the nation; it did possess the power of the purse; and from this by degrees grew the rest.

## 2. EDWARD I AND ENGLISH LAW

An account of Edward I and Parliament is incomplete without some notice of his great legislative measures. In a sense he was the maker of English law as he was the maker of the English Parliament, since his is the earliest reign to which our law looks back. Statutes and decisions of his time are still "good law", unless they have since been set aside. And his reign was marked by great legislative and judicial activity. Apart from a mass of rules, dividing the work more definitely among the various justices in the various courts of *King's Bench*, *Common Pleas*, and *Exchequer*, the business of keeping the peace throughout the country was entrusted to a body of officers known as Conservators of the Peace. In the reign of Edward III these officers, with enlarged powers, had their name changed to the familiar term of Justices of the Peace, and have since then continued to discharge all kinds of local justice. Two points about these "J.P.s" are worth special notice. They have never been paid, and they have no special legal training.

Edward  
and  
English  
Law

The  
Courts  
and  
Justices  
of the  
Peace

This follows on the same idea which appears in the jury<sup>1</sup> system and in Parliament,<sup>2</sup> and in all our county and district councils, namely, that an English citizen has to do his duty to the state without any money payment; it has helped to keep the law closely in touch with everyday life; and it has saved us from the growth of a huge class of officials who, besides being very costly, are perhaps inclined to magnify their own importance at the expense of the good of the public. (*Note 24.*)

Four great statutes of Edward I's deserve special mention — namely, the statute of *Mortmain*; the Second Westminster Land laws (*De Donis Conditionalibus*); the Third Westminster (*Quia* Four great statutes *Emptores*); the Statute of Gloucester (*Quo Warranto*). To understand them we have to think once more of feudalism.

A feudal owner's power and wealth, whether he were king, tenant-in-chief, or mesne-tenant (see p. 79), depended largely on his sub-tenants. While they lived they paid certain services and dues; when they died their heirs paid fines, such as heriots and reliefs (see p. 89), before they succeeded to the estates of the dead. The overlord, then, was interested that during their lives they should be men of substance, able to discharge their duties punctually, and that their deaths should occur with normal frequency. At first sight one might be disposed to think that the last matter might be left to nature, that all tenants would die; but this is not so. There was a class of tenants who never died. If land were granted to a corporation, or to a corporation sole — that is to say, for example, to any monastery, or to "the abbot", or "the vicar", or "the mayor" of such and such a place — these never died: men came and went, but the institution or office lasted. Thus land granted to churchmen never changed tenant; it passed into the "dead hand", into *Mortmain*, and the superior lost for ever all dues coming from its change of owner. "The Abbot of Lands granted to Church *Mortmain* (1279)

<sup>1</sup> The ordinary juryman is indeed paid, but the sum is so small that it cannot be described as a recompense for his loss of time.

<sup>2</sup> Members of Parliament have been paid since 1911.

Glastonbury", for example, never died, never was a minor, and never could be assigned in marriage. Land granted to him paid neither heriot, relief, wardship, nor marriage dues. Beyond this, however, there was a fraudulent practice of handing over land to a religious house and getting it re-granted on easy terms. Edward I's statute of Mortmain (1279) forbade the buying, selling, or acquiring of land in any fashion so that it could pass into *mortmain*; if any such bargain were made, the grant was void, and the land passed to the immediate superior.<sup>1</sup>

The nobles were with the king in this matter, since they were always jealous of the churchmen, who had been the chief holders of land in *mortmain*. They also mostly approved the statute *Quia Emptores* (1290). This was designed to check what was called *sub-infeudation*, that is to say, the practice of a feudal-tenant granting away to a sub-tenant part of the land granted to him. The reason why it was tempting to sub-infeud was that thereby the granter got more men under him and thus more power. An ambitious man would make a number of grants — often very petty ones — to his less pushing neighbours, in order that he might have a call on them in case of need; they would accept, since they would expect his protection in return. For two reasons the great landowners and the king (who was the greatest landowner of all) disliked this. To begin with, it involved all feudal ties in a tangle. It often happened that a man would hold land from three or four different people. He might be a tenant-in-chief from the king for one piece, and sub-infeuded to, say, the Earl of Gloucester for another piece, and to Sir Roger, who was himself a tenant of the Abbot of Tewkesbury, for a third. King, Earl, Knight, and Abbot would all have claims on him. Secondly, the tenant, in his anxiety to extend his feudal power over a large array of vassals, might grant away so much of his holding that he would be unable to perform his

<sup>1</sup> Actually, licenses allowing such grants could be, and easily were, obtained.

"Quia  
Emptores"  
(1290):  
Sub-  
infeuda-  
tion



own due services to his overlord. Hence the statute *Quia Emptores* provided that, if a tenant granted land in this way, the receiver of it would hold, not from the granter, but from the granter's overlord. This statute, like *Mortmain*, favoured the tenants-in-chief, but still more the king, as feudal superior of all land. By increasing the number of tenants-in-chief and diminishing the average size of their holdings, it decreased their social dignity and helped to destroy feudal power.

The king  
as feudal  
superior  
of all land

In another statute, that of Gloucester (1278), Edward tried to check the legal power of feudal lords. This statute instructed the King's justices when they went on their "tours", to inquire by what right (*Quo Warranto*) the feudal lords were holding courts. He meant to deprive persons who could not produce royal charters, of the right to hold such courts. But the barons resisted strongly. Earl Warrenne made the famous reply, as he unsheathed his sword, "Here is my warrant!" Eventually, Edward compromised and allowed any baron who could prove that the right had been exercised since the days of Richard I, to continue to exercise it.

"Quo  
War-  
ranto"  
Feudal  
courts

One more measure, also of lasting importance in our history, was that known as *De Donis Conditionalibus* (1285), which enabled land to be left to a man and his heirs in such a way that he was forbidden to part with it. This set up what is called "entail". As many estates were thus entailed, much land was secured in the possession of great houses. But it was secured to the heir, the eldest son; except where means of evading the statute were found, the younger sons of the house could get none. Thus, though a small number of landowners were kept great, there was no establishment of a landowning caste, who would regard themselves as noble, being inheritors of land, and despise all landless men as socially inferior; the younger sons of great families had to seek their fortune in the world, either in arms, in the Church, or in the law. Thus, as these pro-

De Donis  
(1285).

Entails



fessions were constantly recruited from the younger sons of landed families, no separation grew up between the landed "noble" and the rest. It was not so in France, where all "nobles" remained "nobles", and the immense gap between them and the people was one of the great causes of the Revolution of 1789.

### 3. EDWARD I AND COMMERCE

Edward I was a man of great political ideas; moreover, he had qualities and advantages which many political thinkers have not got. He was no mere dreamer, but a practical statesman. He not only thought, but he planned. He strove to put his ideas into practice in a logical and orderly way; and being a king, and a very powerful king too, he had the chance of trying his schemes. He could do what he liked; he was not, as statesmen often are nowadays, compelled to be content with half-measures, aiming only at the second best, because the best seems too difficult to attain.

We may sum Edward's policy as one of "orderly consolidation". Two aspects of it — his far-reaching legislative measures, and his shaping of the Model Parliament — have been explained. Another, which was of immense value to the kingdom, though it scarcely finds a place in political history, is seen in his commercial policy. At first each town had aimed at getting privileges for its own townsmen: those who were "free of the town" had all sorts of rights of buying and selling which the stranger from outside did not possess. In the regulations of the town guilds and merchant guilds, which were associations of townsmen in each town, we find hosts of regulations limiting and preventing the "foreigner" from competing or interfering with the townsman's profits; and it must not be supposed that "foreigner" included only those who were not English. The word was of far wider meaning. It meant anyone

Policy of  
consoli-  
dation in  
law-mak-  
ing, Par-  
liament,  
and com-  
merce

Restric-  
tions in  
towns

who was not a townsman. Consequently there was a great jealousy between townsmen of different towns, and the whole trade of the country was hampered.

Although the average townsman was unable to see beyond his own town walls, Edward I was not likely to take so limited a view. He did much to prevent the towns shutting themselves up in a cage of restrictions. He encouraged them where he thought the guild rules to be sensible, as, for instance, in insisting upon good quality of wares, and in trying to prevent people from creating artificial scarcity by buying up quantities of goods with the hope of being able to sell again at higher prices. But he looked at the good of the whole country — at the nation and not at the town. And he did something to check the exclusive spirit which he saw around him. He could not believe that it was wholesome that a Londoner should be regarded as a "foreigner" in Southampton, or a Newcastle man as a "foreigner" in York; and though he did not break down the town privileges altogether, he took them under his royal regulation.

One other measure of Edward's must be noted. In 1290 he expelled the Jews from his kingdom. The medieval Church forbade "usury", or the lending of money at interest. It did not, however, prevent men from borrowing, and the Jews therefore acted as the persons who loaned out money. Even the kings borrowed from them to finance their wars. In every country and age bitter feeling can be stirred up against those to whom money is owed, and history is stained by frequent outbursts against the Jews, outrageous and untrue stories being used to whip up popular hatred. Edward had forbidden "usury" when he came to the throne, and instead of borrowing from the Jews he borrowed from the Italian bankers.<sup>1</sup> He then fell in with popular feeling by ordering all Jews to leave England.

<sup>1</sup> His grandson Edward III borrowed from the Florentine bankers the sums needed to finance his French wars, and by repudiating his debts ruined the bankers.

## CHAPTER 18

AN EARLY GREAT BRITAIN AND ITS  
FAILURE

## 1. WALES

An early  
Great  
Britain National legislation, national treatment of commerce, a national Parliament in which all classes were represented, all bear witness to Edward's idea of a "united English nation". But Edward was not content with this. He aimed at something much wider—a united British race. He strove to join under the English crown both Wales and Scotland. In his first object he succeeded: in the latter, he failed. The story of these enterprises is the next main subject.

Conquest  
of the  
Welsh  
marches The Conqueror had hedged in the Welsh by settling on their borders the most warlike of his barons, trusting to employ their turbulent energy to his own gain. His son Rufus blundered into South Wales with an invading army, only to find his slow-moving mail-clad array helpless against the nimble Welshmen. He speedily saw his mistake, and returned to his father's policy, making in it, however, an improvement. He left the task of coping with the Welsh to the barons on the marches—the "lords marcher"—but he stimulated them by granting to them all the land that they could conquer. Piece by piece the lords marcher drove the Welsh back. Each forward step was secured by castles, whose remains still crown so many hilltops in South Wales. The Welsh were pinned in among the hills in the rugged north. All that remained to them was "the Principality", the Snowdon country (Merioneth and Carnarvon, and the island of Anglesey).

Had things gone on thus, an effective but no doubt very brutal conquest might have been completed. But in the reign of Henry III came a sudden revival in the Welsh power, such as often occurs in a downtrodden race. The

barons, too, were fighting among themselves, and the Welsh prince, *Llewelyn ap Gruffydd*, took Simon de Montfort's side, and induced Edward to buy him off in 1269 by surrendering much of the country that had been conquered. Llewelyn, not content with the success of his first effort at fishing in troubled waters, tried again. In 1277 he planned a marriage between himself and Eleanor, the dead Simon's daughter. This being clearly a prelude to rebellion, Edward led an army into Wales. Llewelyn retired with his forces into the Snowdon range, feeling sure that the mountains would fight his battles should Edward follow him. Edward was much too wise to try. Instead of wasting his men among steep rocks he blocked all the passes, brought up a fleet to guard the coast, and starved Llewelyn out. Yet, when the Welshman surrendered, Edward did not treat him harshly; he made him pay homage, which he had already done in 1269, but left him some of his power, and let him marry Eleanor.

*Llewelyn*,  
Prince of  
Wales

Edward I  
invades  
Wales

Treaty  
with  
*Llewelyn*

But in the attempt to settle the conquered country, by dividing it into shires after the English fashion and bringing in English laws to replace the Welsh ones, Edward stirred up much bad feeling. Five years later David, Llewelyn's brother, rebelled. Llewelyn at once joined him. Their plans failed completely. Llewelyn was killed in single combat by one of Edward's followers; David was captured and put to death as a traitor. The north thus came into Edward's hands, and later, in 1301, he showed that he meant to keep it by bestowing on his son the title of the Prince of Wales, a title which has since become familiar in our history. The strong castles of Harlech and Conway still bear witness to his firm grasp of the Principality.

Rebellion  
in Wales

Conquest

The first  
Prince of  
Wales

In his dealings with the Welsh, Edward showed no desire to be harsh. He was determined to be master of the country, and to make his power a reality; but it was not till Llewelyn and David proved themselves traitors to their words that Edward became relentless in destroying all elements of

Welsh rule. It was not till statesmanship and treaty proved useless that he used the blunter method of conquest.

In 1284 the *Statute of Rhuddlan* declared Wales to be annexed to the English crown. Wales was divided up into shires. In the north Llewelyn's domains became Carnarvon, Anglesey, Merioneth, and Flint; in the south the conquered districts formed Cardigan and Carmarthen. Each block had its own Justiciar, the northern one being the "Chief Justice", the southern being the "Justice of South Wales". Local assemblies were continued, Welsh law was to be administered in the courts, and Welsh customs and language retained. Having conquered the country, Edward showed himself wise in recognizing national feeling. His conquest of Wales proved very successful and lasting.

Very different was to be the course of his dealings with Scotland. (Note 25.)

## 2. SCOTLAND

### (i) EDWARD I AND THE SCOTTISH THRONE

The reigning King of Scotland was Alexander III, whose rule had hitherto proved prosperous (see p. 101). Now came a change.

The end of the reign of Alexander III was darkened with disasters. The King's children, by his first wife, Margaret of England, sister of Edward I, died. Alexander, indeed, was still vigorous. He was only in his forty-fourth year; by a second marriage he might still raise up heirs for the kingdom. Unhappily these hopes were futile. The King himself was killed by falling over the cliffs while riding back at night to rejoin his queen. The only direct descendant was a granddaughter, Margaret, the child of Alexander's daughter who had married Eric, King of Norway.

Here Edward saw his chance of drawing still closer the destinies of Scotland and England. The kingdoms were on good terms. His plan was to unite them by a marriage

The Welsh  
settle-  
ment; the  
Statute of  
Rhuddlan

The  
question  
of the  
Scottish  
succession

Edward  
I's  
plans for  
marriage  
alliance

between *Margaret, Maid of Norway*, and his own son, Edward, Prince of Wales.

No one can deny that the plan was good, always provided that it was to be wisely carried out. People felt this at the time, for the Scottish Estates wrote to Edward, "we on our part heartily consent to the alliance, not doubting that you will agree to reasonable conditions". Edward was very reasonable. In the *Treaty of Brigham*, which arranged the matter, it was laid down that Scotland was to retain her laws, rights, and liberties, and to remain a separate kingdom. Edward made no claim to the overlordship of Scotland at this time, but he certainly was planning for a future union of the kingdoms. To Scotland in general this idea seems to have been not unacceptable — the two nations had long been at peace (indeed, at that time there was no man living who could remember Anglo-Scottish warfare), the anglicization of Scotland had smoothed over disparities of race and customs, and union seemed an almost natural sequel.

Unluckily all depended on the Maid of Norway, and she fell ill on the voyage from her father's country to Scotland, and had to be landed in Orkney, where she soon died. Thus Edward's scheme fell to pieces, and, what was far worse, Scotland was left without a direct heir to the throne.

Edward might have acted more wisely if he had recognized that his great chance was gone, and had given up any idea of further interference in Scotland. But this was just what Edward could not do. He ordered the learned men of his kingdom to produce evidence showing that Scotland was really a vassal kingdom of England. As a result there was collected a great mass of extracts from chronicles, some of which were fictitious, all of which were doubtful in so far as they referred to a permanent vassaldom. Edward, however, was satisfied that they established his claim to overlordship, and he was further encouraged by a request from several of the rival claimants to the Scottish throne that he should act as umpire between them.

Treaty  
with  
Scotland  
(1290)

Death  
of the  
Maid of  
Norway  
(1290)

Edward  
claims  
overlord-  
ship

Edward  
to decide  
on dis-  
puted  
succession

Yet here he and the Scottish barons committed themselves to a course, the only end of which was an appeal to arms. It is all very well to act as umpire: what if the umpire's decision is not accepted? Choosing one candidate is sure to disappoint the rest. No one could imagine that a powerful sovereign like Edward would allow his decision to be defied. Yet the only way to support it was by force. And this meant a struggle of the weak to avoid the dictation of the strong.

Question  
of  
Scottish  
homage

Englishmen are too ready to look solely at Edward's object, and to forget his unwise and afterwards violent methods; Scots sometimes only see the latter, and accuse the King of deliberate treachery in all he did. Edward thought of the old English claims over Scotland in the narrow spirit of a lawyer. And, in any case, he wanted to believe in their authenticity. The Scots urged that any homage done by Scottish kings had been for lands in England, and that William the Lion's homage for his whole kingdom had been annulled by Richard I (p. 101). But Edward had determined to be lord over Britain, cost what it might. The Bruces and the Balliols were equally determined to fight for their own interests. Thus, if we argue about oaths and rights we are wasting our breath. Edward may have broken oaths, but Robert Bruce did the same. English troops harried and burnt, and Scottish troops retaliated in kind.

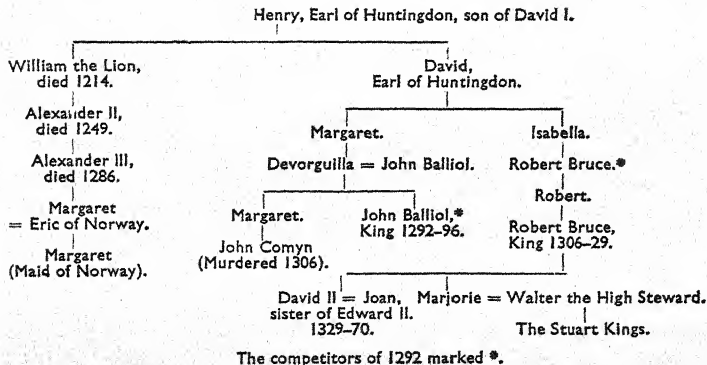
Norham  
(1292)

When the Scottish barons met Edward at *Norham*, Edward made it clear that he claimed to be acting as Lord Paramount over Scotland. The candidates and their supporters might have withdrawn then and there. They did not; on the contrary, the nine candidates present, and most of the clerical and lay magnates of the country, after due deliberation, admitted Edward's claim. We cannot call them selfish traitors ready to sell their country for the chance of a crown, for it is clear that so far the mass of the Scottish nation did not resent Edward's claim. They



believed that he would make an honest choice; they hoped that he would content himself with the mere title of Lord Paramount; and in any case they were influenced by the fear of civil war, and by the threat of the army which Edward had brought with him. Edward was still acting honestly, if somewhat domineeringly. A court of eighty Scots and twenty-four Englishmen tried the question. John Balliol, Robert Bruce, and Hastings, had the best claims. In November, 1292, Edward, acting on the decision of the commission, placed Balliol on the throne.

The  
claimants  
Balliol  
and  
Bruce



The reign of *John Balliol* is always regarded as a disgrace alike to king and nation, but it is hard to see that Balliol could have done better. Edward took care, before he set him on the throne, to make him swear to be obedient to him; but the Scottish nation had not the slightest intention of letting him be obedient. A quarrel at once broke out. Macduff, brother to the Earl of Fife, appealed to Edward against one of Balliol's decisions. Edward bade the Scottish King come to England, as his vassal, to have the case tried there. It was clear that if he refused Edward would dethrone him; but if he obeyed his own people would cast him out. He could either keep his oath and betray his

John  
Balliol  
and his  
difficul-  
ties

country, or be true to his country by breaking his oath. Such was the unpleasant choice set before him.

Breach with England (1295) Balliol strove to gain time. He protested; he actually came to England. But the Scots had by this time made up their minds. They drove out all Englishmen and seized their estates. They persuaded Balliol to make an alliance with France (1295). As Edward was at war with France, this was open defiance.

Edward's invasion Annexation of Scotland As soon as Edward could disentangle himself from his difficulties with France, he marched with an army into Scotland to subdue one whom he looked on as a rebel. He stormed Berwick, where the townsmen were brutally massacred, and his general, Surrey, defeated a Scottish army at *Dunbar* — the Scots rushing down to attack what they thought to be a retreating force, and being themselves routed. Edward soon overran the whole country. Balliol was deposed, and Edward took Scotland for himself, setting up Warenne as Guardian, and Cressingham as Treasurer. Scotland as an independent kingdom seemed to have come to an end.

Rise of national feeling in Scotland Thus Edward had been led from policy to force, from being an umpire into becoming a combatant. In following him step by step it is not easy to say at what precise point he transgressed from what was fair into what was not justifiable. Each act may be described as the natural or legal consequence of what went before. Yet none the less at the end he found himself in the position which only "Might" could turn into "Right". He had undertaken to crush a nation because its chief men had broken faith with him, and this to one whose motto was "Keep troth" may have been reason enough. But the life of a nation cannot be forfeited in this way, and Edward, whatever he thought of himself, was bound to appear to the Scots as a foreigner, aiming at conquest.

## (ii) THE FIGHT FOR SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

From the first no one had liked Balliol. Yet when a king of England showed that he meant to conquer Scotland and make it part of his kingdom by force, the whole of Scotland determined to resist. Hitherto Edward had had, in the main, to deal with the Scottish barons, some of whom were of mixed Norman descent, practically all of whom had absorbed the feudal sentiment of fealty to the liege lord. Now he had to encounter something quite different, Scotland in arms against him.

The hero round whom this national spirit gathered was *Sir William Wallace*, a great soldier and a good man. He was joined by a considerable force, though few nobles supported him; either they thought his cause too hopeless to risk their estates, and so were lukewarm, or they were jealous of him as an upstart. Warenne and Cressingham moved from Berwick in search of him, and Wallace posted himself near Stirling. Stirling Bridge was a place of great military importance in Scotland; below it the Forth could not be crossed by an army; close to the west lies a rugged hill district; consequently Stirling commands the only easy access from the south of Scotland to the north. Warenne and Cressingham completely mismanaged the battle; their advance guard was in time to seize the bridge, but retired again. The next day Cressingham insisted on an attack though Wallace was now within easy reach of the bridge and the causeway leading northwards from it, and the English would have to cross it slowly, two by two, for it was narrow; not even when an easy ford close by was pointed out would Cressingham wait to use it.

Wallace coolly waited till a third of their force was over, then attacked, seized the causeway head, and cut to pieces the body who had crossed, while their comrades stood helpless on the other bank. Cressingham himself fell in the fight, and the whole force was scattered in headlong rout.

Scotland  
in arms

William  
Wallace

The  
Battle of  
Stirling  
Bridge  
(1297)

One by one all the fortresses in English hands fell, and Wallace followed up his blow by leading his men to plunder in the northern counties. The pitiless ferocity of Edward's soldiers at Berwick found ready imitators among the Scots, who flayed the dead Cressingham and kept his skin as a token of their triumph, are said to have set fire to the chapel of Dunnottar Castle, leaving the English garrison, who had taken refuge there, the choice between being burnt alive or casting themselves into the sea, and slew unarmed men, women, and children in the northern counties.

Wallace's  
Raid on  
England

Edward was not the man to put up with this tamely. He hurried back from Flanders, and started in person for Scotland to crush Wallace, who had now been named Guardian of Scotland. But though it was easy to invade Scotland, it was not easy to draw the Scots into a battle. Wallace had wasted the country and withdrawn his men north of Edinburgh. The King could not discover where he was hiding, and had much difficulty in feeding his own army. At length two Scottish nobles, who either were genuinely in Edward's service or could not accept the low-born Wallace as a leader, revealed where the Scots lay. Edward set off instantly, and, making the utmost speed, came on Wallace near *Falkirk* before he had time to retire. Though the Scottish pikemen fought valiantly, they could make no reply to the deadly fire of the English archers; their own archers who might have answered the storm, and their men-at-arms, who could have driven off the archers, had been beaten from the field. The steady array wavered, and when Edward, seeing his chance, poured in a final charge, Wallace's men broke and fled. It is said that 15,000 Scots fell.

Edward  
invades  
Scotland  
(1298)

Battle of  
*Falkirk*  
(1298)

For seven years Edward strove to complete his conquest. He led army after army into the country, but so long as Wallace was at large the resistance went on. At length, in 1305, Wallace was betrayed by some of his followers to Sir John Menteith, who was acting as Edward's sheriff in Dumbarton, and by him handed over to Edward. Menteith

Years of  
resistance  
(1298-  
1305)

is generally called a traitor for this, and as a Scot he acted treacherously to his country. Still, he had taken Edward's side, was Edward's officer, and in capturing Wallace was so far doing his duty to the master he had chosen. Wallace was taken to England, and tried as a traitor to King Edward. He denied that he could be a traitor, since he had never sworn to obey Edward. But the King had him condemned. He was hanged, and his body, cut into four pieces, was fixed on the gates of Newcastle, Berwick, Stirling, and Perth. Edward meant to warn the Scots against further risings, but he made a great mistake. His merciless treatment of Wallace only made the Scots hate him the more.

Wallace  
captured  
(1305)

With Wallace dead, Edward might think that Scotland was subdued. In a year, however, the Scots had found a fresh leader. *Robert Bruce*, the grandson of Balliol's rival, had not given up hopes of the crown. Hitherto he had played no more patriotic or consistent a part than most Scottish nobles; he had sworn fealty to Edward, broken it to join Wallace, deserted his cause in turn and made his peace again with Edward, commanded Edward's artillery at the siege of Stirling, and at that very time entered into a treasonable "band" with Lamberton, Bishop of St. Andrews. This did not seem of much promise, particularly as Bruce followed it up by the murder of his rival, the *Red Comyn*, who was Balliol's nephew and was thus Bruce's most powerful rival. Bruce and Comyn met in a church at Dumfries to discuss their claims and Bruce's plans for an insurrection, and probably a sudden quarrel arose. Bruce stabbed Comyn — a wild act which seemed likely to mar his cause from the first. Not only had he defied Edward; not only, as a red-handed murderer, was he a foe of the Church and an outlaw; but, as his victim had a claim to the Scottish throne and was moreover the most powerful baron in Scotland, Bruce had begun by distracting with a fresh feud a country already, to all seeming, hopelessly divided in the face of the enemy. Moreover, the murder compelled him to act before

Robert  
Bruce  
(1306)

Murder of  
Comyn

he was ready, and left him no choice but to unfurl the standard of independence.

Bruce, however, acted with courage. He hurried to Scone, was crowned King, and gathered a few men. Aymer de Valence pounced on his scanty following at Methven, and scattered it. Bruce had to flee to the Highlands, where, though safe from the English, his own countrymen still sought his blood. John, Lord of Lorne, a cousin of Comyn, pursued Bruce to avenge his murdered kinsman. From all these perils Bruce's own personal strength, and his faithful friends, of whom the chief was Sir James Douglas, "the good Lord James", preserved him. Still, so desperate were his fortunes that he had for a time to take refuge on the lonely island of Rathlin, near the Irish coast. His brother Nigel, taken prisoner at Kildrummie, was hanged, a fate which befell most of his supporters who fell into Edward's hands. Hitherto Edward had been amazingly forbearing with men who had fought against him, usually accepting submission and restoring their estates. Wallace alone had suffered, and he was an outlaw. But now the King's patience was exhausted.

In 1307 the tide turned. Venturing over to Arran, and looking longingly across the sea at his own castle of Turnberry in Carrick, Bruce sent a spy; if there seemed a chance for a surprise, the spy was to light a fire. The spy found no hope, and lit no fire. But Bruce and his comrades saw one, and crossed. For some time he was hunted up and down Galloway and Ayrshire, but every now and again, as at Loch Trool and Loudon Hill, he turned on his pursuers and routed them; and each victory brought him fresh followers. At the English Court men ridiculed the outlaw as "King Hobbe", but Edward knew better. He made ready once more to march into Scotland with an army, but died at Burgh-on-Sands, in sight of the hills where Bruce had struggled so manfully.

Even had Edward lived, he could not have won in the end.

Bruce  
crowned  
king  
(1306)

Bruce in  
exile

Bruce's  
victories

Edward  
advances  
towards  
Scotland  
(1307)

Death of  
Edward I  
(1307)



He might have beaten Bruce, but he could not have conquered the Scottish nation and kept it down by force of arms. His plans, promising as they were at the outset, had failed, and his efforts to force them to success had only made failure more hopeless. He had wished to unite England and Scotland; all he had done was to divide them more deeply than they had ever been divided before. Under the sturdy blows of the "Malleus Scotorum" had been forged the tough steel of a nation's character.

## CHAPTER 19

## EDWARD II (1307-1327)

## 1. EARLY MISRULE

Kings, like ordinary men, sometimes stand revealed by their favourite tastes. William I was a great hunter, "loving the red deer as their father"; Richard I enjoyed the struggle of a tournament; Henry VIII was a mighty wrestler and great at casting the bar; each of these tastes somewhat betrays the man; Elizabeth's wardrobe illustrates her vanity, just as the love of "sauntering" tells us more than a little of Charles II, the leaden saints round the brim of the hat display Louis XI of France, and the homely leg of mutton and apple dumplings describe George III. Edward II also had his favourite amusements. He was fond of rowing and driving, and proud of his skill in digging ditches and thatching roofs. And he loved also to play at "cross and pile": that is to say, tossing a coin and crying heads or tails.

He was a weak man, placed in a situation which made the worst of his weakness. He did not carry on the work that his father had begun in the consolidation of England; still less could he complete the task which had proved too much for his father, namely, the conquest of Scotland. He was unlucky too in the men about him. Even Henry III, who

Character  
of  
Edward II

and of  
his time



was no more apt as a ruler, had a great churchman and minister in Stephen Langton, and an illustrious rebel in Simon de Montfort. Edward II's friends and foes were alike men of no value.

Incapable of ruling himself or his realm, Edward trusted the task to favourites. The friend of his boyhood, *Piers Gaveston*, had been much disliked by Edward I, and banished from the court. The young King at once recalled him, made him Earl of Cornwall, married him to his niece, and put him over the heads of all the nobility. Gaveston was naturally vain and empty, and the success turned his brain. He combined insolence and incapacity in all he did. His one talent appears to have lain in the bestowing of rude nicknames, which were appropriate enough to stick and pointed enough to sting. The nobles, assembled in Parliament, agreed immediately that he must be banished; but though they drove him out they could not keep him out. A solemn assembly of the Great Council in 1310 appointed "Lords Ordainers", who were intended to take the government out of the King's hands, and these officers did indeed produce a scheme of reform known as the Ordinances, which included the appointment of responsible Court officials, the summoning of Parliament, and, of course, the perpetual banishment of Gaveston. Edward II brought him back again for the third time in 1312, but this proved to be his end. He was besieged and captured at Scarborough, taken south into the midst of his enemies, the Earls of Lancaster and Warwick, whom he had nicknamed the "Hog" and the "Black Dog of Arden", and beheaded by them on Blacklow Hill.

## 2. EDWARD II AND SCOTLAND

Bruce had seen enough of Edward I to realize how greatly he gained by his death. It was more glory, he declared, to win a foot of land from him than to wrest a kingdom from

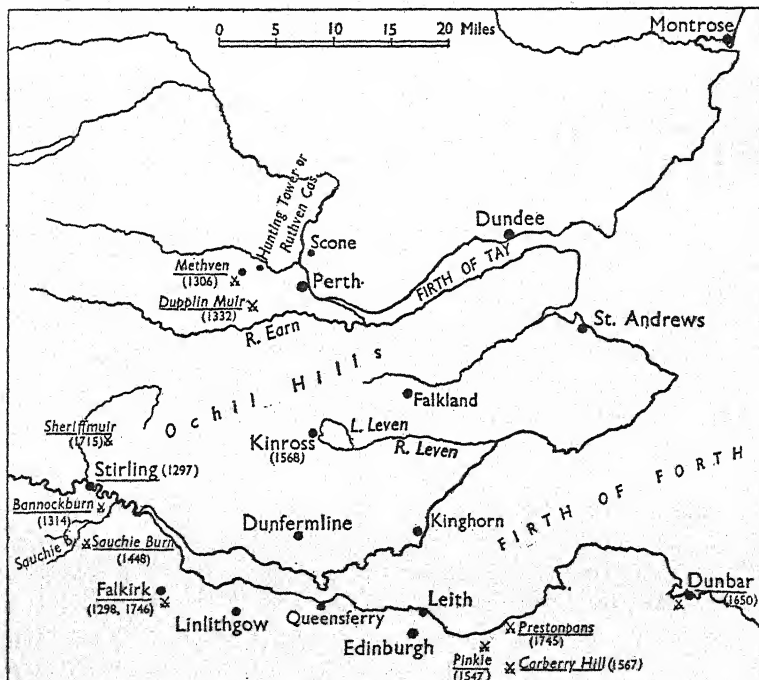
Edward's  
favourites:  
Gaveston

Lords  
Ordainers  
(1310)

Death of  
Gaveston

Bruce and  
Edward II

his son. Once the old "Hammer of the Scots" was gone, his son, Edward II, was revealed as a feeble foe. He trusted to favourites, who proved no more capable than he was himself. His reign was broken by discontent, thriftlessness, armed insurrections. While quarrels and jealousy



SOME OF THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTTISH HISTORY

paralysed England at home, she could not be vigorous in maintaining her hold on Scotland.

Step by step Bruce won his way. Aberdeen came into his hand; his brother Edward reduced Galloway to his obedience; the French king gave him secret aid; in 1310 the clergy declared him — excommunicated man as he was — the lawful king of the land. One by one the castles in

**Bruce**  
estab-  
lishes his  
position  
as King

Scotland were wrested from English hands. Lord James Douglas surprised Roxburgh; Randolph, Earl of Moray, captured Edinburgh by leading thirty daring men to climb the Castle Rock; but all the exploits were not left to the men-at-arms. A farmer named Binnock, engaging a body of countrymen to aid him, seized Linlithgow by driving a wagon of hay under the gateway, so that the portcullis could not be let down.

By 1314 Stirling Castle alone held out, and Edward II with an army of 20,000 men marched north to relieve it. Bruce awaited his coming near Stirling, and on 22nd June drew up his men south of Stirling Castle on the ground between the Forth and its tributary the Bannock Burn. He had five thousand men, and his lieutenants were his brother Edward, Lord James Douglas, Walter the Steward, and Randolph, Earl of Moray, but he had also 10,000 camp followers and "small-folk" (poor land-holders who, though excellent fighting men, could not afford protective armour) whom he sent to a place of concealment in the rear. His army, true to the Scottish tradition, was essentially an infantry force, while the English army was strong in heavy cavalry to which the footmen were mere auxiliaries.

On 23rd June the English came in sight. A body of cavalry under Clifford crossed the Bannock Burn, but was routed by Randolph, while the English van after crossing the burn retired in disorder. What happened then has been the subject of much controversy, but the main movements of the fight at least are clear. On the morning of the 24th, Bruce drew up his men in schiltrons (bands of spearmen arranged in hollow squares), which repeated charges of the English heavy cavalry failed to dislodge. Then a brilliant charge by his handful of light horse put the English archers out of action. Edward, because of the nature of the ground, could not bring his whole army into action, and the English were thrown into confusion by the awful havoc wrought by the Scottish spears. It was at this juncture that Bruce sent

Battle of  
Bannock-  
burn  
(1314)

orders to the hidden "small-folk" to advance. When the English saw this new "army" coming over the ridge of the Gillies' Hill they were filled with consternation. King Edward fled from the field, leaving his army to the unhappy fate of a broken force in a hostile country.

Bannockburn decided the question once for all. England could not conquer Scotland. But Edward II was too obstinate to yield. Henceforth the Scots held steadily the upper hand. Berwick was taken, and one raid after another devastated the English border. One expedition, led by Randolph, harried and burnt its way southward into Yorkshire; encountered there, at Mytton-on-Swale, by the Shire levy headed by a mass of clergy, the Scots made such a slaughter among the white surplices that the fight was known as the "Chapter of Mytton". In 1322 there was a series of invasions and counter-invasions, and King Robert penetrated to Yorkshire, where he won a small victory at Byland Abbey. At last, in 1323, a truce was made for thirteen years; but Edward II persistently refused to recognize the independence of Scotland.

Scottish  
attacks on  
England

Chapter  
of Mytton  
(1319)

End of the  
struggle

The truce had lasted for only four years when Bruce broke it. Douglas and Randolph seized the moment of Edward II's deposition to march once more across the Border. Edward III, with a large army, marched to meet the Scots. When he at last managed to come up with them they were so strongly posted that he dared not risk an attack across the River Wear. But what he did not venture the Scots did; James Douglas led a night raid into the English camp and actually got to the royal tent before he was driven back. Then the Scots retreated by night, leaving their camp fires burning so that the English did not perceive their going.

Edward  
III and  
the Scots

This was the last effort. In 1328 peace was made between the two nations at Northampton. Bruce was recognized as lawful King of Scotland, and England gave up all her claims. Scotland had triumphed.

Peace of  
North-  
ampton  
(1328)

Robert Bruce's reign ended in 1329. For Scotland it was

Independence of Scotland decided

a memorable reign. Before its close he had obtained a mastery over all his foes at home and abroad. He had established the alliance between Scotland and France which was to lead to so much. He had freed Scotland from the foreign invader. He had united it as it had never been united before. All alike were ready to obey him. The barons, Norman in descent and hitherto half-Norman in feeling, had become good Scotsmen and good patriots. In the fire of national trouble there had been welded a nation, firm, self-reliant, confident, proud of its race and of its king.

### 3. OVERTHROW OF EDWARD II

In England the disaster of Bannockburn was turned to Thomas of Lancaster's advantage by an ambitious noble. This was *Thomas of Lancaster*, son of Edmund Crouchback, the younger brother of Edward I. Thomas held from his father the earldoms of Lancaster, Leicester, Derby, and expected to succeed, through his wife, to the earldoms of Lincoln and Salisbury. His chief exploits up till now had been the destruction of Gaveston and his refusal to go north with Edward to Bannockburn, a piece of fortunate prudence which enabled him to push off all responsibility for that disaster on his cousin, the King. For a year or two he practically ruled the kingdom, till Edward grew restive under his control. As Lancaster's chief allies were great men on the Welsh border, Hereford and the Mortimers, Edward sought to set up a party for himself in the west, and promoted a pair of new favourites, the *Despensers*, father and son, to wealth and possessions. This proved a prelude to more disturbance. The *Despensers* were banished in 1321, but the King, showing some energy for once, collected an army, crushed the western nobles, and drove Lancaster in flight northward. The King's friends turned him at *Boroughbridge*, where he strove to cross the Ure, scattered his men, and took him prisoner. His fate could not be doubtful. He was beheaded at Pontefract and a number of his adherents hanged or

Edward's new favourites: the Despensers

imprisoned; among the prisoners was Roger Mortimer.

Time was the only thing needed for a fresh outbreak against the King. His promises, indeed, sounded well. In 1322 he and the Despensers repealed the Ordinances, and declared that affairs of interest to the realm were to be treated in Parliament, "as hath heretofore been accustomed". But, as "heretofore accustomed", the feebleness of the King and the greediness of the Despensers soon supplied cause for a new plot. This time it was hatched in France, where Roger Mortimer had joined Queen Isabella, who had gone to France to pay homage. She brought over her son, and the conspirators removed to Hainault, the Queen refusing to return to England and openly discarding her marriage vows. In 1326 the plot was ripe. As soon as the conspirators landed, all that were discontented — and that was the greater part of England — joined them. The King meant to flee to Ireland, but dawdled aimlessly on the Welsh marches till he was captured with his friends, the Despensers. They were hanged; the King was deposed and imprisoned. Soon afterwards he was murdered in Berkeley Castle.

Opposition of Queen and Mortimer

Overthrow of the King

Edward II's catastrophe has nothing to redeem it; it is a sordid tale of selfish violence and family ambition. Yet, while the details are confusing, there are one or two points which will become of importance later, and may therefore be noticed. (*Note 26.*)

Character of his catastrophe

First, then, we observe the "Favourite". He is a man raised up by favour of the king from a more or less insignificant position, as a counterpoise to the power of the old noble families. This is true of Gaveston, and to a certain extent true of the Despensers. But it must also be noted that the "favourite" was also the king's chief agent in carrying on the government. Thus he was not only the recipient of favour, but the bestower of it also. To use a word of much more modern meaning, he was a sort of "minister"; yet he differed from a true minister in that he held his place

The "Favourite"



solely by the king's favour. The point of interest in Edward II's day is that the old hereditary nobility, who naturally hated favourites as upstarts, and regarded the right of filling the king's great offices as belonging to themselves, strove to control these appointments. In 1309, and again in 1322, the name of Parliament was invoked, and an attempt made to limit the king's freedom of choice, but to no real purpose. The fact was that Parliament was still but a name, and had no effective power; it had ideas, but could not enforce them.

## CHAPTER 20

### THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

Edward III's reign began in 1327. He was, however, only fifteen years of age, and the real power lay in the hands of the Queen, Roger Mortimer, and the Council of barons. These had been united in the hostility to Edward II, but there agreement ended. The Council was soon shaken by quarrels between Mortimer and Henry of Lancaster (younger brother of Thomas). Each schemed against the other. Mortimer surprised a plot headed by Edward II's half-brothers, the Earls of Norfolk and Kent, and punished the Earl of Kent with death. This piece of violence, added to the facts that the Government had been singularly unsuccessful in its dealings with Scotland, and that all were scandalized by the conduct of Mortimer with Queen Isabella, turned everyone against him. Edward acted quickly and decisively. He caused Mortimer to be seized and hanged, and, by imprisoning his mother, Isabella, he freed himself from leading strings.

In Edward III's reign the main thread of the time is not far to seek. It is found at once in the war with France. Plainly, however, the "Hundred Years' War" — for so it is named — will lead far beyond the reign of Edward III. War did not indeed go on all the time from 1338 till 1453. There were truces now and again, and often long ones.

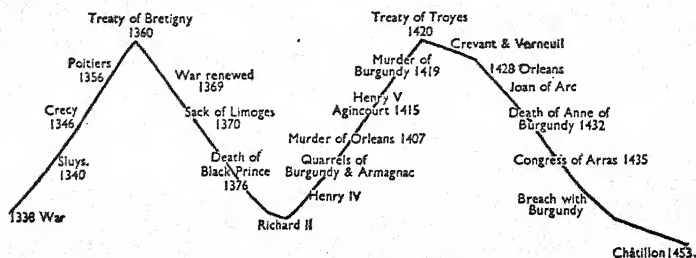
Over-  
throw of  
Mortimer

Edward  
III seizes  
power

The  
Hundred  
Years'  
War

But, speaking generally, for a hundred years England and France were enemies. In following this extended period of history, which covers the reign of five English kings, it is convenient to fix in the mind some landmarks.

The war may be divided into two periods of great success and two periods of failure; two huge waves of victory, each slipping away in its turn into a deep trough of defeat. The *first wave* covers the early part of Edward III's reign. Periods  
of  
division  
of the war



THE TWO WAVES OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

We have the Battles of Crécy and Poitiers, and the Treaty of Bretigny, in which the French king admitted the English claim to the south-west of France. This was followed by a time of decline in the latter part of Edward III's reign, and of complete failure in Richard II's, when a French force landed in Sussex. The *second wave* began to rise with Henry IV, and reached its crest with Henry V. He outdid the glory of Crécy and Poitiers by his victory at Agincourt; he married the King of France's daughter, and was called his heir; his infant son Henry VI was crowned king of France in Paris. The summit of Henry V's glory was marked by a treaty, the Treaty of Troyes, just as the Treaty of Bretigny had been the highest point of Edward III's achievements.

But then came the second period of failure. First, Joan of Arc, and then the breach with Burgundy shook English power. By degrees all was lost that had been won, till, in 1453, nothing was left to England but Calais.

## 1. THE ENGLISH ARCHER

The striking fact in the war is that over this long period the English won the great battles, and that in spite of being much weaker in numbers. Chroniclers' numbers are not very trustworthy, but neither at Crécy, nor Poitiers, nor Agincourt were the French less than three to one; probably their advantage was still greater, yet in every case they were hopelessly beaten, and indeed, until the appearance of Joan of Arc, no pitched battle went against the English, with the one exception of Beaugé. This superiority in the field was due to the English archer.

Everyone knows his characteristics. He carried the long-bow, a large and stiff weapon. He drew the cord to his ear instead of to the breast, as the shortbowman did. The shaft, thus driven, flew with amazing force; and so long as the archer was supplied with arrows, he could keep up a very rapid and accurate fire.<sup>1</sup>

Curiously enough, with all these merits, it was some time before the longbow was valued as it deserved; it is, further, probable that it was not even English in origin. Such captains as Richard I and Simon de Montfort placed more faith in their "arbalestiers" or crossbowmen, and most of the archers who did such execution at Falkirk were Welshmen. Giraldus Cambrensis, who was familiar with Wales in Henry II's reign, records the extraordinary powers of the South Wales archers. He himself saw at Abergavenny the iron points of arrows piercing the massive oak door four inches thick, while one of the Norman knights received a shaft that struck through his mail shirt, his mail

<sup>1</sup> The archer usually carried twenty-four arrows in his quiver. On going into action he emptied his quiver, and thrust the arrows, point downwards, into the ground before him. The longbow was effective to about 180 yards, and arrows would carry to over 300 yards as an extreme range: in rapidity of fire it exceeded any musket before the days of breech-loading. The difficulty with archers was to keep them supplied with arrows. It was common for them to be reduced to picking up the enemy's missiles, or even tearing them out of the dead and returning them.

breeches, his leg, the wood of his saddle, and sunk deep into the horse's flank.

Whether the English copied the longbow from the Welsh or not, it is further clear that longbowmen could not of themselves win battles. They shook the Scots at Falkirk, but, as we have seen, the cavalry took the credit of the victory; many thousands of archers were with Edward II at Bannockburn, yet the battle was completely lost. Moreover, even granting that archers were effective against the Scots, they might not be equally good against the French. The Scots fought on foot, mostly armed with spears or pikes, but the French main strength lay in their mounted men-at-arms, and since the battle of Hastings it had been a universal belief in Europe that no infantry could stand before a charge of this heavy-armed cavalry. It was not enough to have archers; the thing was to use them properly.

The  
archer  
and the  
Scottish  
war

The development of the art of war which was to give England such crushing victories in France, began in Scotland. There, on the death of Robert Bruce (who was succeeded by his five-year-old son, David II), Edward Balliol, a refugee in England, determined to make a bid for power. He put himself at the head of a band of nobles called the "Disinherited" and set sail for Scotland. At *Dupplin* he met the Scottish army. Balliol drew up his men in a formation of dismounted men-at-arms in the centre with blocks of archers on the wings. He won a complete victory and was actually crowned King of Scotland by the English and his adherents. The tactics which had given his handful of troops the victory over eleven times their number are the forecast of those to be employed by the English in the Hundred Years' War.

Scotland  
and the  
Disin-  
herited

## 2. THE CAUSES OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

In the relations between England and Scotland we find throughout history, right up to the Union of the two Crowns, that France seized every opportunity to stir up trouble in

France  
and  
Scotland

Scotland whenever she could injure England by so doing. Thus, after Dupplin Moor, Balliol, as King, did homage to Edward III for his kingdom. In 1333 Edward went to his help against the still rebellious Scots, and won the victory of *Halidon Hill* (1333).<sup>1</sup> But the Scots refused to submit, though they sent their boy king David I to France for safety. There Philip VI, the first of the Valois, warmly supported the Scots in their opposition to Edward, and thus the Scottish question was one of the causes of the great war between England and France. (*Note 27.*)

But besides irritation with France over this policy, Edward had deeper causes for hostility. The English *woollen trade* had developed enormously, and depended almost entirely on the export of raw wool to the great Flemish towns. These towns were quarrelling with their overlord, the Count of Flanders, who, in his turn, was vassal to the King of France. Edward considered that if he could establish a claim to be himself King of France, he would gain control of the wool towns.

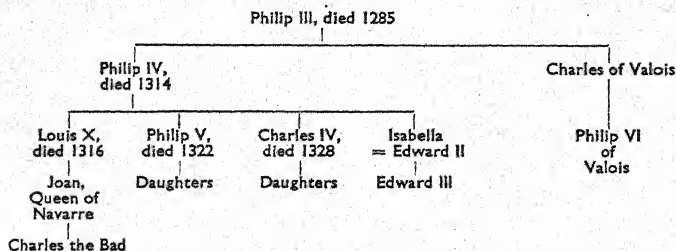
This question of the wool trade was connected with another. England traded extensively with Gascony, the sole fragment remaining to her of the Angevin Empire. The great *wine trade* between the two countries was very influential. The French constantly threatened to absorb Gascony, in which case that trade would be cut off. In 1333, while Edward was in Scotland, the King of France invaded Gascony, and this supplied Edward with the pretext he needed to declare war.

Once war had been decided, Edward looked about for advantages. He specially wished to enlist the help of the Flemings and with this in view, he brought forward his claim to the French throne. For if he were King of France,

<sup>1</sup> This battle illustrates again the uselessness of the Scottish pikemen against archers. Edward was besieging Berwick. To relieve it the Scots had to beat his covering army, and were therefore obliged to attack. Their columns, advancing up the hill, were so riddled with arrows that very few reached the English lines. And when at length they broke and fled, Edward's mounted men cut them to pieces in the retreat.

the Flemings, in fighting for him, would not be guilty of "rebellion".

The claim itself to the throne was a poor one. The three sons of Philip IV<sup>1</sup> had reigned and died leaving no male heirs. Edward, through his mother Isabella, was Philip IV's grandson. The throne, however, had been given to Philip IV's nephew, Philip of Valois (Philip VI). The French argued that by the old custom of the Salian Franks (the so-called *Salic Law*) which governed the succession to the French throne, no woman could succeed, and that therefore Edward's claim through a woman was worthless. Edward refused to accept this argument. But by doing so he knocked the bottom out of his own case, for though the three brother kings had left no sons, they all had daughters, and one of these daughters had a son, Charles the Bad of Navarre. Thus, if the Salic law held, Philip of Valois was the rightful king; if it did not, Charles the Bad should be on the throne; either way Edward had no title. Moreover, having, in 1328, done homage to Philip for Gascony, he had tacitly admitted Philip's title, and barred his own. Legal reasoning, however, was of as little real value here as in Scotland in the days of Edward's grandfather. Armed men were the only arguments that would command a hearing.



<sup>1</sup> The "fatal three", Louis X, Philip V, and Charles IV. Superstition declared the extinction of the line to be due to the "curse of the Templars" destroyed by Philip IV.

## 3. CRÉCY AND POITIERS

War began in 1338, but the early years were singularly unfruitful. No battles took place on land; Edward's allies died or left him. The one achievement was the naval battle of *Sluys* where Philip tried to guard the Flemish coast, but Edward's fleet proved too strong for him. Even at sea we remark the supremacy of the archer, and the new English tactics. Edward used his ships just as he was in the habit of using his men: they were grouped in threes, archers on the flanking ships, and men-at-arms on the centre one. The archers shook the defence; the men-at-arms boarded and beat down what resistance remained. Save for the difference that the English made the attack instead of standing on the defensive, *Sluys* is on the water what all the battles of the time are on land. *Sluys* is important, too, because it gave the English command of the Channel.

It was not till 1346 that a decisive battle was fought. Edward landed a force near Cherbourg to divert the French from an attack on Gascony. Beyond this object, however, his plans do not appear skilful. He loitered up the Seine, giving Paris ample time to put itself in a state of defence, and allowing the French to gather in great force on the northern bank of the river. He failed to surprise Rouen, and eventually, cutting loose from his base in Normandy, hazarded a flank march across the country to join the Flemings. He gave the French the slip at Poissy, crossed the River Seine, and, marching now in desperate haste, covered sixty miles in four days, and drew near the Somme. To his consternation the bridges were all broken, and the fords guarded. He moved down the river, getting into greater difficulties, for the river grew more and more difficult to cross. A French host was already at his heels, when a peasant betrayed to him the place of the very last ford on the river, Blanchetaque. By a moonlight march Edward crossed at low water — for the Somme there is tidal — and the rising



tide prevented immediate pursuit. For the moment he was safe: he had secured a retreat to Flanders. He now made up his mind to fight, should the French pursue him too closely. A suitable position was not far to seek. He found it between *Crécy* and Wadicourt. There he drew up his army in a formation consisting of blocks of dismounted men-at-arms flanked by archers. The French first sent forward their Genoese crossbowmen, whose bolts could not carry as far as the English longbowman's arrows. The Genoese fell into confusion. The French mounted knights rode through them in an attempt to charge. They failed repeatedly, and by dusk the English lines, still holding firm, had won the day.<sup>1</sup>

Battle of  
Crécy  
(1346)

The next morning revealed that the French had lost 1500 knights alone; the common soldiers brought up the total to near ten times the number, while the English loss was little over a hundred; only two knights were killed.

Crécy is generally reckoned among the decisive battles of the world. If completeness of victory is decisiveness, it deserves its place; it settled, too, the pretensions of the feudal chivalry who had been so long the military bullies of Christendom. But so far as the campaign was concerned, it settled nothing. Edward marched north and starved out Calais, turning out many of the French inhabitants, and putting a large English colony in their place. The survivors of the French nobles went home to wonder at their overthrow, but not to learn from it.

Victory  
of English

No settle-  
ment of  
war

Ten years later the lesson was repeated. King John had replaced Philip on the French throne. Hostilities had languished owing to the plague of the Black Death, which had fallen on Europe in the meantime. In 1355 the war flared up again, this time in the south. The Black Prince led a huge army eastward from Bordeaux, gathering plunder

Renewal of  
hostilities  
(1355)

<sup>1</sup> Two picturesque incidents mark Crécy. First, the death of the blind King of Bohemia gave to the victor, the young Prince of Wales, his crest, the "feathers" and motto which are retained to this day. Second, the young Prince, when hard pressed, was left by his father to "win his spurs" by his own valour.

March of Black Prince from Bordeaux on all sides. He repeated the raid the next year, this time striking northwards, and then reaching the Loire followed it westwards to the suburbs of Tours. Here he learnt that the French king had moved from Blois to cut off his retreat. So he withdrew, and making the best speed he could, though laden with plunder, reached *Poitiers*. The two armies just missed falling in with each other on the march. The Black Prince slipped past, and John came up with him at Maupertuis, about seven miles to the south.

The Black Prince had about 7000 men, of whom 2500 were archers, the bulk of the remainder being men-at-arms with a few light troops; all were mounted. The French were about 20,000, but the levies just drawn from *Poitiers* were of poor quality. The English plight was so bad that on 18th September the Prince offered to release his prisoners and make a seven years' truce; but the French refused these terms. So on the next day the English made ready to resume their retreat, or fight if need were.

The French coming up in force, the Black Prince was obliged to fight. He drew up his men behind hedges and vineyards. The French cavalry repeatedly hurled themselves against this position. After a prolonged struggle it looked as if the English might be worn down by weight of numbers, but at the critical moment a small force dispatched by Edward under the Captal de Buch appeared on the flank. This was the signal for a general attack by the English. The French believed that the flank attack was made by a larger force than was really present, and gave way to panic. A

Results of *Poitiers* general rout ensued, and those who stayed to fight were made prisoners; these included the King, his son Philip, twenty-six great lords, and close on nineteen hundred knights and persons of consequence. The capture of the King alone made the victory important. It was bound to lead to a satisfactory peace. The *Treaty of Bretigny*, in 1360, gave Edward all the duchy of Aquitaine, the county of Ponthieu, and Calais in full sovereignty. John was also to pay a large

ransom. In return, Edward gave up all claim to the throne of France and to the Plantagenet dominions of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou. In a word, he gave up the shadow and grasped the substance. (*Note 28.*)

#### 4. THE FIRST PERIOD OF DECLINE

The Treaty of Bretigny (1360) marks the crest of the first wave of English success in France. The results may be summed up shortly under three heads. First, the acquisition of Aquitaine in full sovereignty, that is to say, free from all claims of overlordship on the part of the French Crown. Secondly, the establishment of a close connection between England and the Flemish cities, which is marked by: (*a*) the appearance of England as a sea power, wielding a supremacy of the sea, at any rate on the Channel; (*b*) by the growth of a busy trade in wool and woollen goods; and (*c*) by the holding of Calais as a door through which help might be given the Flemings, or attacks made on France. Thirdly, the perfecting of a new method of fighting, in which the old feudal chivalry became of little use when opposed to a combination of archers and infantry. It is well to bear in mind that these results were of solid value. Edward III's reign is sometimes described as being one of barren glory rather than of substantial gains: that is true in a sense only. Substantial gains were made: the fostering of the wool trade and a control of the chief markets for wool, the capturing of the wine trade of Gascony, the supremacy in the Narrow Seas, the invention of a system of invincible tactics, were all substantial additions to England's power. As a nation she stood far higher in 1360 than in 1327. But the gains did not prove permanent, and so the glory became barren. Edward's war policy had definite enough aims, and for the time attained them; it is only condemned by its failure to hold what it had won. (*Note 29.*)

Results of  
the war

Gains of  
Edward  
III

A period of decline followed. The barons of Aquitaine

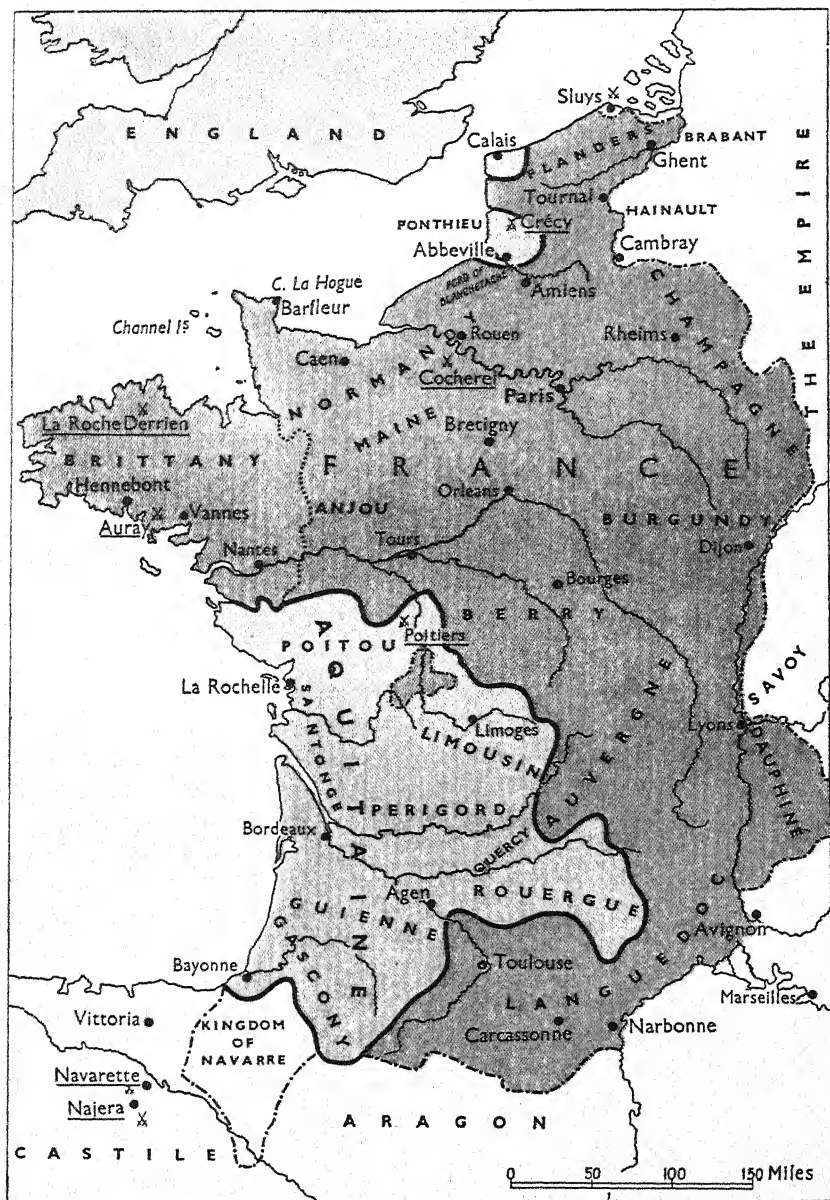
Decline of English power rebelled against their English sovereign. In 1369 war began again — this time on different lines. Charles V, the Wise, had no intention of fighting great battles. His chief captain was Du Guesclin, a wily warrior who refused to meet the English in open fight, but let them exhaust their strength in marching about the country. The French shut themselves up in the fortresses and towns. One city, *Limoges*, stood a great siege, at which the Black Prince stained and tarnished the name he had won for himself. He had long been ill with a terrible disease, which had perhaps driven him to violence and ill-temper. When Limoges fell, he ordered a ruthless and horrible massacre of civilians, including women and children. Then, in 1372, the English met with a great naval defeat at the Battle of La Rochelle and lost command of the sea. It became impossible for them to fight in the south, and in 1375 a truce was signed which of all their conquests left to them only Calais in the north and Bordeaux and Bayonne in the south.

## 5. CLOSE OF THE REIGN OF EDWARD III

Close of Edward's reign During the last part of his life Edward III had become a feeble old man. He was senile and was now entirely influenced by a bad woman, Alice Perrers. Against her, the King's sons struggled in vain. The Black Prince tried to lead a reforming party, but he was almost an invalid by now. He quarrelled with his brother John of Gaunt, who went even further than he in his demands.

The Good Parliament In 1376 at what was called "the good Parliament", the Black Prince scored a brief triumph over his brother, but he was a dying man and hardly had Parliament separated than his life came to its premature end. He left a little son, Richard, as heir, but one whom he feared might suffer at the hands of the ambitious John of Gaunt.

Death of Edward III Within a few months the feeble dishonoured old king followed his son to the grave. Edward III died in 1377,



FRANCE AFTER THE TREATY OF BRETAGNY, 1360

English possessions in red



and it was said that Alice Perrers tore the rings from the dying man's fingers before leaving him.

The throne passed to the little son of the Black Prince, who became king as Richard II.

## CHAPTER 21

### RELIGION: WYCLIF AND THE LOLLARDS

More than a hundred years before Martin Luther began his dispute with the Roman Church which ended in the Reformation, England had seen a churchman start on a very similar career. The story of John Wyclif and his followers, the Lollards, shows clearly that many people in England were dissatisfied with the authority of the pope long before the time came when the nation broke away from the Roman authority, and the Church in England became National.

Early  
movement  
for  
reform in  
the  
Church

The worst part of John's quarrel with the pope had been that it opened the door to interference and taxation from Rome. This showed itself in Henry III's reign, when that king was flattered by the popes into making loans of money to help the papacy in its final struggle against the empire in the person of Frederick II and his descendants. England was regarded by the popes as a "well of wealth from which they could draw unlimitedly". A very great deal of English land was in the hands of churchmen, and the popes strove continually to keep the churchmen under their own control, and cut them loose from the control of the State. For example, Pope Boniface VIII, in his bull, "Clericis Laicos", directed the clergy to pay no taxes to King Edward I unless by his consent. Edward retaliated by outlawing the clergy who refused to pay, and brought Boniface to withdraw. None the less, the independence of the clergy from the State was a point for which the popes strove steadily, and which the State was sure to resent.

Dislike of  
the  
papacy



In Edward III's reign this anti-papal feeling became very strong. Men saw a great deal of money being sent to the papal court, and they did not think it right that they should pay it. Each priest and dignitary, including bishops, had, **Annates** for example, on appointment to pay "annates" (that is to say, the first year's income from his appointment) to the pope. They saw, too, a great many foreigners who were appointed by the pope holding rich livings, deaneries, and high posts in the Church, and they would have preferred that Englishmen should have these posts. They saw a few churchmen, each holding many livings, and perhaps never going near some of them, and they contrasted the fine clothes and crowds of servants of these men with the poverty of the parish priests. It seemed to them that these rich churchmen neglected their duty, and thought more of the good things of this world than it was right for them to do. "God," they said, "gave His people to be pastured, not to be shaven and shorn."

The feeling of the time is reflected very strongly by Chaucer, who, in the Prologue of his *Canterbury Tales*, hits off all the weak points of the churchmen. He describes the Prioress as dainty, frivolous, and amiable, wearing a brooch with the motto, "Amor Vincit Omnia", and so soft-hearted that she would weep if she saw a mouse in a trap; the Monk, "full fat and in good poynt", who loved hunting and gaudy apparel more than

"Upon a book in cloystre alway to poure,  
Or swynke (work) with his handes, and laboure  
As Austyn<sup>1</sup> bid";

**The Friar** the Friar, an "easy man" to give penance, beloved and familiar with womankind, and

"The beste beggere in his hous,  
For though a widowe hadde noght oo schoo (one shoe),  
So plesaunt was his *In Principio*,  
Yet wolde he have a ferthing or he wente";

<sup>1</sup> Augustine's rule, "*Laborare est orare*".

the Summoner, who taught that "purse was the Arch-deacon's hell", but did not act up to his principles; the Pardoner, with wallet

"Bretful of pardouns come from Rome all hot,  
Who made the parsoun and the people his apes".

We must not think that all the churchmen in England were negligent or careless; there were many then — as there always had been — who were bent on doing their duty to the utmost. Witness Chaucer's Poor Parson, who

The  
Poor  
Parson

"Waited after no pompe and reverence,  
But Christes lore and His apostles twelve  
He taughte, but first he folwede it himselve".

Unfortunately it was not, for the most part, these men who were in high places. Bishops and the greater men were mostly little known in the countryside; monks led retired and sometimes lazy lives in their monasteries, but no one saw them. More bitter feeling was aroused by the friars, for they were in daily contact with the people.

That the friars, especially the Dominican and Franciscan Friars, should have become the object of dislike is at first sight curious, for these orders were the result of one of those periodical "revivals" in religion which aimed at bringing the Church into more intimate connection with the poor, and giving them practical help and teaching. Both orders began early in the thirteenth century. St. Dominic founded his — the Black Friars — to combat heresy and to strengthen faith. They were accordingly preachers and teachers; men of learning and zeal. St. Francis bade his followers show, by the example of a pure, simple, cheerful, and contented life and charitable acts, what the true followers of Christ should be. Hence his followers<sup>1</sup> — the Grey Friars — were to be like the Apostles, unlearned men, without property, living in poverty amongst the poor, healing the sick and succouring the wretched. For many years both Black Friars and Grey Friars did an enormous amount of good, the Fran-

The Dom-  
inicans  
and Fran-  
ciscans

<sup>1</sup> St. Francis had no wish to found an order. This was done after his death.

ciscans especially being real benefactors of the poor. Before long the Grey Friars also became in part, like the Dominicans, a learned order, and for more than a century the Friars supplied Europe with most of its leaders of thought and learning, such as Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon. Then both sets of friars began to accumulate wealth, not for themselves, but for their orders. Thus they tended to leave the homes of the poor, going instead among the well-to-do, or to the universities, where they became great scholars, but no longer teachers of what they had first been sent to teach, the simple message of Christ. And those who remained scattered over the country were disliked because, being an order founded by a papal decree, they were obedient only to the pope; they were not obliged to obey the English bishops; they often interfered between the parish priest and his flock; they intercepted a great deal of charity for their own order; and as there were occasional black sheep among them, as among all ranks of men, the orders got a bad name. Perhaps jealousy of their popularity and success will account for some of the abuse, but no doubt some of the complaints were well founded.

All these things helped to rouse a feeling of hostility, and, to make matters worse, the popes themselves had at this time fallen on evil days. A pope who was a Frenchman decided to reside not in Rome, which was in a state of great disorder owing to feuds between the nobles, but at Avignon in France; his successors followed his example, and so the popes fell much into the power of the kings of France. Englishmen hated France, with which they were carrying on a prolonged war, and included in their dislike popes who appeared to be French popes. And some of the Avignon popes were men of no exalted aims, more interested in the getting of money than they should have been. They strove to find rich posts for their friends; they reserved the right of appointing to all benefices left vacant by any appointment they made, a claim which enormously extended their patron-

The  
papacy

The  
popes at  
Avignon;  
"the Ba-  
bylonish  
captivity"  
(1309-78)

age; and as the popes received "annates" or firstfruits from every benefice to which a churchman was preferred, they arranged their preferments so as to get as much in annates as they could; they often granted "provisions", preferments made in advance, before the holder of an office was dead. Incessant disputes about elections all led to appeals to the courts at Avignon, and much money was gathered over these suits. Clement VI, who particularly distinguished himself by gathering money in this way, remarked with a cynical laugh that none of his predecessors had known how to be popes.

Papal  
"pro-  
visions"

These usurpations of the popes did not go entirely unchecked. In 1351 the statute of *Provisors* was passed, which rendered persons who accepted papal provisions liable to imprisonment. This was followed, in 1353, by the statute of *Præmunire*, which forbade appeals<sup>1</sup> being made to foreign courts, and in 1393 the statute was repeated, in a more strict form, by mentioning that the getting of processes, excommunications, and bulls from Rome<sup>2</sup> would incur the penalties of *præmunire*, i.e. forfeiture of goods and imprisonment at the king's pleasure. These acts were strong enough, but they were not often enforced. The truth was that generally pope and king could arrange to make and approve such appointments as would suit them both. They had more to gain by being on good terms than by quarrelling. Now and again when the king was displeased, these statutes would be enforced; normally they were allowed to be idle.

Legisla-  
tion  
against  
papal  
claims.  
Provisors  
and  
Præmu-  
nire

The latter part of Edward III's reign was, as we see, one of those periods when king and pope were not friendly. Still worse days were in store for the papacy. In 1378 it had returned to Rome, but the pope who was chosen, Urban VI, proved so violent and insulting to his cardinals that he roused up much opposition. Finally the French cardinals declared Urban's election invalid, and proceeded to elect

The  
Great  
Schism  
(1378)

<sup>1</sup> In matters of which the cognizance properly belonged to the King's court.

<sup>2</sup> Whither the popes had returned in 1378.

another Cardinal, who took the title of Clement VII, in 1378. A year later Clement moved from Italy to Avignon, and Europe was immediately divided into two camps, one supporting the Roman pope, the other the Avignonese. Each pope denounced the other as a schismatic; it was not long before pious men, witnessing this indecent contest, began to think that the fault lay with the papacy itself. This opinion was strengthened by the increasing taxation which fell on the Church. If one pope and his papal court were a financial burden to Europe at the best of times, it was doubly a burden to have to support two. Each of the popes busied himself in declaring the other to be anti-Christ, and Europe felt that they were in all probability both right.

Effect of  
Schism

Thus when seventy years of "Babylonish captivity" (such was the name given to the period during which the popes lived at Avignon) had ended, only to give place to the "Great Schism" and the scandal of two popes at once, it was certain that there would be many led to criticize and condemn the papacy altogether; of this critical spirit Wyclif is the type.

Wyclif was a Yorkshireman (born in 1320) who had gone to Oxford, where he had become Master of Balliol College. He looked at matters from a historical point of view. The faults of the Church, he said, came in the main from its pursuit of wealth and power on earth; if it had remained true to the poverty and simplicity of the apostles none of the abuses would have occurred. Thus he found nothing in the Bible to justify the payments made to the pope, called annates and firstfruits, or to excuse the holding of more than one benefice at once (pluralities), or to defend the easy and careless lives which were led alike by many churchmen and many friars. These opinions were popular. Wyclif was employed to draw up an answer disputing the pope's demands for money, and he was used by John of Gaunt in his political schemes. (Note 31.)

Wyclif and  
papal  
abuses

Wyclif proved a ready weapon in John of Gaunt's hand, and John of Gaunt sheltered him from the rage of the clerical party. When Wyclif was summoned to St. Paul's to be tried for what he had written, the Duke stood beside him to defend him; when Courtenay, Bishop of London, declared that Wyclif was little better than a heretic, the Duke threatened to drag Courtenay from the church by the hair of his head. A riot began; the citizens of London rushed in to defend their bishop; and Wyclif nearly lost his life. Brawling and abuse would not mend matters. Wyclif himself took no part in it. Indeed he had no sympathy with John of Gaunt, but as a scholar and reformer he tried to spread his ideas by practical means. He founded an order of preachers, "the Poor Priests", to teach his ideas among the people. He also directly appealed to the people himself by his tracts, which he wrote, not in Latin, the language hitherto used for all religious discussion, but in homely, plain, forcible English, which all could understand. We shall find Luther also discarding Latin in favour of his native German when he too begins his quarrel with the Roman Church. Finally, Wyclif anticipated Luther by causing the whole Bible to be translated from the Latin into English, so that it should no longer be the property of scholars, but open to all to read for themselves, or aloud to their friends who were too ignorant to read.

Some of this work might seem offensive at Rome, but it was applauded in England. Wyclif, however, could not rest here. From attacking the practice of the churchmen, he went on to search deeper. His teaching, in his phrase, "Dominion is founded on grace", was taken to mean that it was lawful to withdraw obedience from those who were sinful, and especially from the unworthy popes; and when he went still further and attacked the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, he began to lose the support that had hitherto been given him. John of Gaunt hurried to Oxford to bid him be silent. The University itself, till then proud

John of  
Gaunt  
supports  
Wyclif  
(1377)

Wyclif's  
"Poor  
Priests"

Wyclif's  
Bible

Wyclif's  
"heretical"  
opinions

Gaunt  
turns  
against  
Wyclif

of him, found itself forced to abandon him. The party of the friars, backed by the King and Archbishop Courtenay, and aided by the pope, proved too strong. Wyclif had to leave Oxford; but even so, though his opinions were declared heretical, his enemies dared not make him a martyr. He died peacefully in his parish at Lutterworth.

Victory  
of the  
clerical  
party

Death of  
Wyclif  
(1384)

Part of Wyclif's work was before its time. The bulk of Englishmen agreed to blame the wealth and neglect of some churchmen, but they had no mind to cast off the Church. A reform in the government of the church was popular: a change in doctrine was not. We shall see even in Henry VIII's day how slowly and unwillingly England changed its belief.

## CHAPTER 22

### THE BLACK DEATH AND SOCIAL CHANGES

While Edward III had been waging war in France, great upheavals had taken place in England. To Edward and his warriors the war must have seemed of overwhelming importance, but looking back we can see that the great changes in social and religious life were equally interesting.

The Norman Conquest left the class who cultivated the land largely in the position of "unfree". They were "bound to the land" (*glebae ascripti*) and had to give to their lords so many days' work each week ("week work") and certain extra days' work at the busy season of hay-making, harvest, and ploughing ("boon work"). Besides these they paid small "dues" of eggs, fowls, and so on. So long as these services and dues were paid, they might expect to remain in possession of the small plots of ground on the produce of which they lived, for although it was by no means clear that the law gave them any security of tenure, or would interfere at all between them and their masters, no lord would be tempted to drive off a well-

Social  
changes:  
villeinage



behaved villein, since to do so would be to lose his labour. As time went on, however, many of the villeins *commuted* their services; that is to say, they had come to an arrangement with their lords to pay money instead of service; for example, if a man's labour was reckoned at twopence a day, he would pay sixpence a week if he had owed three days' work, and further amounts for extra days. The plan was convenient for both parties: the villein got more time to work on his own plot of land; the lord got money with which he could hire labourers, and was saved the trouble of continually striving to compel unwilling or lazy villeins to do their work for him.

Commu-  
tation of  
service

This plan of "commuting" services for money was spreading gradually over the country, but it was not complete, when it was interrupted by a disaster. This was the Black Death, a fearful plague which ravaged our island from 1348 to 1349.<sup>1</sup> At least one-third of the whole population perished. It is literally true that often the living could scarce bury the dead. In the diocese of Norwich two-thirds of the parish clergy died: in a religious house at Heveringland prior and canons died to a man: of the sixty monks at St. Albans only thirteen survived. From what happened to the clergy we can judge the mortality of laymen. Indeed, high and low, rich and poor, town and country fell before the pestilence. The manor rolls, which record changes among the tenants on an estate, show that often whole families were swept off, leaving none to inherit the land.

The  
Black  
Death  
(1348-49)

Fall in  
popula-  
tion

It was in these rural districts that the effect was most felt. It is plain that labour would become very hard to get; and, further, since at the height of the plague men were so terrified that they left the harvest to rot ungathered in the fields, corn became scarce. This caused a rise in prices; and as prices rose, and labourers were few, we should be prepared

<sup>1</sup> The "Black Death" swept over all Europe, and was introduced probably from the East. It reached England from the Continent.

**Rise in wages** to find a rise in wages also. In fact, this is what happened. Wages rose sharply.

**Difficulties of the lords** This all hit the landowners hard. To begin with, many of their tenants were dead, some without leaving heirs; and so they lost the payments for commuted service which these had owed. Further, they lost in another way. They had commuted services at the old rate of wages. They accepted, say, 2*d.* a day, since for 2*d.* they could hire a labourer who would do the villein's work. But if wages doubled, the 2*d.* which represented a day's labour would only hire half a day's labour. And the rise was more than double. It was a common complaint that whereas a woman's labour had cost  $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* a day, now it cost 2*d.* or 3*d.* Hence ruin stared the lord in the face if he had to receive at the old rates and pay at the new ones.

**Action of Parliament** Something clearly had to be done; and as the landowners were strong in Parliament, we shall find their policy in tracing what Parliament did. The first idea was to check this rise in wages which seemed to them ruinous. No injustice was intended, because Parliament meant to check the rise in prices also; if prices remained the same, it was argued, there was no need for wages to rise.

**Statutes of Labourers** In the series of laws called the *Statutes of Labourers*,<sup>1</sup> labourers were ordered to take the "old" rate of wages — that is to say, the rate current in 1347. It was one thing to make the order, and another to enforce it. The task proved too big. The authority of Parliament was not very active over all England at the best of times in the fourteenth century; but when, owing to the Black Death, all local courts were paralysed, laws were easily evaded. The rise in prices went on; and so long as prices did not fall, men could not live on the old wages. Yet the lords could not afford to see their estates left uncultivated: it were better to lose half than lose all; better to give higher wages than

**Wages fixed**

<sup>1</sup> Issued by proclamation in 1349; enacted as a Statute in 1351; repeated with additional penalties in 1357 and 1360.

have no labourers. Thus many lords were tempted to break the very laws which were intended to protect them, by offering the higher wages which Parliament prohibited. Parliament truly showed no lack of vigour or courage in its opinions. It reinforced the Statute of Labourers by threats of imprisonment, branding with a hot iron, slavery, and even death. But even ferocious penalties will not make men obey impossible laws. If it was a choice between the certainty of starvation and the chance of punishment, no one could doubt what the choice would be.

Here the class interest of Parliament stood revealed. We may find a justification in theory for their action: it may be allowed that they meant no wrong. But when their remedy failed, the selfishness of the landowners — and the landowners meant Parliament under another name — is betrayed in the obstinate savageness which added penalty to penalty to drive men into suffering. England was on the threshold of the first great struggle between labour and capital: the struggle between "we cannot" and "we will make you".

In another respect the reign of Edward III was important in social history. It was a period during which the great *woollen industry* rose to increased prosperity. England had for long been exporting raw wool — indeed, she was the chief source of wool for all Europe. The great pastoral areas of Yorkshire and of the Cotswolds provided the flocks for this raw material, which was exported to centres abroad, chiefly to Flanders, to be woven into cloth. The right to export wool was placed in the hands of a body called the "merchants of the staple". The King obtained an important part of his income from the tax of 6s. 8d. levied on each sack of wool exported, and the revenue from this tax rose to £68,000 per annum.

Edward III used this organization of the Staple as a weapon against his enemies. The Staple had its headquarters in a town or towns nominated by the King. Edward

The  
wool trade  
under  
Edward  
III

moved the Staple, first to Bruges when he wished to ally with the Flemings; then to England when the foreign war made Bruges unsuitable; finally to Calais, then an English possession.

He also interested himself in other gains which England might obtain from his Flemish alliance. He brought over weavers to East Anglia<sup>1</sup> and revived the manufacture of cloth. This was the time when the city of Norwich became one of the largest and richest in the kingdom. Norfolk, indeed, specialized in one kind of cloth, called "Worsted", after a village of that name, a little place which to-day has only its great church to show what was its former prosperity and importance. The industry thus revived was destined to grow continually until it became, as it has remained, one of the chief sources of English wealth.

The weavers, moreover, worked on their own lines, breaking away from the guilds, which from this time began to decay. The cloth industry gradually centred round the "clothier", who was a capitalist manufacturer buying wool, sending it to be "broken" and "combed", then passing it on to a fresh set of workers to be spun, woven, and dyed. Thus he managed the whole production of the article, took all the risks, and received his due profit.

## CHAPTER 23

### RICHARD II (1377-1399)

#### 1. THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

Richard II was twelve years old when he became King, but government lay in the hands of his uncle, John of Gaunt.

The country was restless and unhappy. The Statute of

<sup>1</sup> Norfolk and Suffolk still bear many signs of this ancient connection with the Low Countries, in the houses with "Dutch" gables, steep roofs, and so on.

Labourers had "tried to put the clock back". The peasants found that they did not get a fair wage, nor could they move from their homes to the towns to get work where wages were better. Some landlords now took to sheep-farming, instead of corn-growing, and labourers' wages fell while unemployment increased. A Kentish priest *John Ball* began to preach against the lords. (Note 30.)

Agrarian  
discontentJohn  
Ball

He taught, "Things will never go right in England so long as there be villein and gentlemen; by what right are they whom we call lords greater than we?"

This teaching was echoed in the rhyme that ran through England:

"When Adam dived and Eve span  
Who was then the gentleman?"

Rebellion only waited for an occasion, and the King's advisers gave it. They were at their wits' end for money. In 1377 a poll tax of carefully graduated amount had been taken. In 1380 the tax was repeated, but much less distinction was now drawn between rich and poor. The wealthiest paid not more than a pound; even the poorest paid a shilling. As a shilling at the legal rates of wages represented about a whole week's wage, the oppressiveness of it may easily be understood. It caused the smouldering discontent to burst into flames. In 1381 risings took place in East Anglia and in all the counties near London. The most pressing danger came from the Kentishmen. Under their leader, *Wat Tyler*, they rolled on towards the capital, burning manor houses and the court rolls, which held the record of their serfdom, and hanging the lawyers "for", as they said, "not till these be dead would England enjoy its freedom again". The artisans of the city opened the gates. John of Gaunt, the young King's uncle, who was practically ruler of the kingdom, was absent in the north, and the rioters pillaged and burnt his palace at the Savoy; they forced their way into the Tower, and murdered the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Treasurer, who had proposed the hated poll tax. Panic

Poll Tax

The  
Peasants'  
Revolt  
(1381)Wat  
Tyler

Richard II seized the Court, but King Richard II, a boy of sixteen, and the rebels remained cool at a time when there was the utmost need of courage and coolness. He pacified the Essex rioters at Mile-End by granting them the freedom which they demanded, and as a pledge caused royal banners to be delivered to the men of each shire as a sign that they were no more serfs, and that they were pardoned for their rebellion. Content with this, many went home, "but the great venom still remained behind" in the ringleaders, Wat Tyler, and John Ball. Next day the King went to meet the Kentishmen at Smithfield. Their leader, Wat Tyler, rode up so near to the King that "his horse's head touched the croup of the King's saddle", and began a dispute with the King's attendants. Walworth, Mayor of London, thinking that he meant to attack the King, cut him down. The mob were bending their bows to shoot at the royal party when Richard rode forward alone and shouted to them: "I will be your leader", and by fair words and promises got them to disperse quietly.

This exhibition of opportune bravery was worthy of the son of the Black Prince: unhappily the end was less creditable. The promises were not kept. It is true that the King had, in promising freedom, promised more than he should have done. He was giving what was not his to give; granting away the property of the landowners, for, as we have seen, the right to command the labour of serfs was property in the strictest sense of the word. Still, seeing that the King had saved the life of himself and his friends by his pledges, some effort should have been made to keep them. Unluckily the continued rioting in the Eastern counties, the burnings, murders, and brutalities, made it difficult to pardon the rioters. So, the first crisis over, the King employed force and put down the Peasants' Revolt with great severity.

Thus injustice had led to violence, as it often does, and neither party had gained. In few cases were the lords able

to force their serfs to pay services again; on the other hand, many rioters were hanged, and the rebels did not get the abolition of serfdom which they had demanded.

Since labour could not be obtained at the old rates, or services re-exacted without danger of violence and murder, it was necessary to pay the new rates, or to do with less labour. Some lords granted land on lease to tenants for a rent, giving them stock as well as land. Thus the tenant had to find the labour; the lord avoided the difficulty. Here we have the beginnings of the modern farmer, a person who stands between the labourer and the landowner. Others, however, met the difficulty in another way. There was a great demand at the time for wool, and English wool was then the best that could be had. So, many lords started sheep-farming instead of arable farming. It paid better, because less labour was needed. Many labourers were required for a large arable farm; but when it was laid down in grass one or two shepherds could tend all the sheep on it.

Changes  
in agri-  
cultural  
system

Land let  
on lease

Sheep-  
farming

Thus sheep-farming led to many men being out of employment; and as under the old system the serfs' small patches of land were often mixed up with the wide holdings of the landowner, now the latter came to wish to evict the serfs and take their land for sheep-farms. He enclosed also the "waste" or common land on which the serfs had pastured their cattle, and this, too, made it hard for the serfs to keep their holdings. Thus the landowners who had at first struggled to keep their serfs, ended by trying to drive them off altogether. No doubt great misery was often caused by this depopulation. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Parliament tried to stop this process of enclosure for sheep-farms, but without much result.

Depopu-  
lation

So in the end the effects of the Black Death were extraordinarily wide. It changed the face of rural England. It broke up the old "manorial system": it prepared the way for modern conditions, under which land is let at a money rent: it did much to consolidate properties, and gave

Effects  
of the  
Revolt



thereby the chance for the trying of better methods of farming: and in the end it caused villeinage to disappear. It was not that the peasants won freedom immediately by their revolt, for in some cases the revolt made their chains tighter. Yet this was only for the time. By degrees the labour of villeins came to be no longer required; and the lords granted freedom easily since villeinage was no longer worth keeping. The boon to the peasants, however, was an inestimable one. Their prayer had been granted — “ Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the poor: that the man of the earth be no more exalted against them ”.

## 2. MISRULE OF RICHARD II

Richard, as soon as he could, wished to throw off the control of his uncle. His reign in one sense resolves itself into a struggle between the King and the new house of Lancaster. John of Gaunt, the third son of Edward III, was now the eldest surviving uncle of the King. He was also the most powerful. His first wife, Blanche of Lancaster, brought him the Duchy of Lancaster and the earldoms of Derby and Leicester. His son Henry married the great heiress Mary Bohun, and gained the Dukedom of Hereford.

Richard's character makes him, personally, a fascinating study. Golden-haired and handsome, he was extremely attractive, but just as his father, the Black Prince, in the latter part of his life showed himself violent-tempered and cruel, so Richard, too, had a terrible streak of cruelty and violence in him, and this became worse after the death of his dearly loved wife, Anne of Bohemia.

Richard soon showed himself determined to assert his independence against his uncle, and began to oppose him in every way. John of Gaunt had favoured Wyclif and the Lollards. Richard now persecuted them. He ordered Wyclif's works to be destroyed, and issued an ordinance against the “ Poor Priests ”. The Peasants' Revolt and its misfortunes were attributed to the misgovernment of Lan-

caster, and in 1386 he withdrew from England altogether, finding himself so unpopular with people and King. He went off to Spain where, through his mother, he considered he had a claim to the throne of Castile, and there he remained for a few years. His son Henry, however, took up his father's policy of opposition and led the attack on Richard.

Richard was extravagant, and the friends with whom he surrounded himself, especially de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, and de Vere, Earl of Oxford, were unpopular. The Duke of Gloucester, the King's youngest uncle, acted through Parliament and asked for a commission to regulate the expenses of the royal household. In 1386 Parliament went further and asked for the dismissal of Suffolk and Oxford. The King refused, and his friends took up arms in their own defence. They were led by de Vere, who was defeated at the battle of Radcot Bridge (1387). Now Henry of Derby, supported by Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, and by the Earls of Warwick and Arundel, called themselves the "*Lords Appellant*", because they appealed to Parliament to "impeach" the King's friends. This meant that the accused were not tried by the law of the land in the law courts, but were tried by Parliament, which earned by its savagery the name of "Merciless". At the session which followed, the King's friends were condemned and executed, and the King had to put himself entirely under the rule of the "Appellants". (Note 32.)

Whatever his feelings, Richard knew how to be patient. For three years he quietly accepted the position, and Thomas of Gloucester acted practically as ruler of the kingdom. Then in 1389 Richard declared that he "was of an age to manage the kingdom", and took power for himself. For eight years he ruled peacefully, and the country had some chance of settling down. Then trouble arose, and it came from Richard's foreign policy, which was based on peace with France.

The interminable war begun by Edward III still lingered

Richard's  
friends

Radcot  
Bridge

The Lords  
Appellant  
(1386)

The  
Merciless  
Parliament  
(1388)

Richard's  
personal  
rule

The  
French  
War

**Disasters in France** on. Disaster, indeed, had come to the English in France. Desolated by the Black Death, torn by the great Revolt of 1389, England had no energy to spend on the foreign war. The French had recaptured Aquitaine, and all Gascony except Bordeaux and Bayonne. In 1377, the year of Richard's accession, they had even crossed the Channel and raided England, penetrating into Sussex. Richard, when he began his personal rule, resolved on peace, and despite the clamour of his opponents he made a truce with France. Then, in 1396, he decided to go further and, his first wife having died, he made a formal alliance with France and married the little French princess, Isabella.

**Raid on England**

**Truce of 1396**

**Marriage alliance**

Gloucester and the war-party protested violently against the peace. Gloucester revived, too, the accusations of extravagance against the King and his court. Richard would not stand this revival of trouble. He struck, and struck hard. Gloucester was arrested, and hurried over to Calais, where soon after he died in prison (murdered, so men began to say); another former Lord Appellant, Arundel, was beheaded, and a third, Warwick, was banished. Richard now showed that he had never forgotten the injuries done to him through the execution of his friends. He called a Parliament at Shrewsbury, packed with his supporters, which laid down that no restraint could legally be put on the King, and which gave the King the right to rule through a commission without summoning Parliament. He became thereby an absolute ruler.

**Attack on his opponents**

**Death of Gloucester**

**Parliament of Shrewsbury**

He soon showed what that rule would be. So arbitrary and violent did he become that some have thought he may have been insane. He taxed ruthlessly, raising quite illegal forced loans and imposing heavy fines, and he surrounded himself with hordes of retainers in livery and broke out into the wildest extravagance. The people began to suffer under his actions and to complain.<sup>1</sup>

**Richard's despotism**

<sup>1</sup> Piers Plowman gives a most vivid account of the feeling and sufferings of the poor, and their resentment against the King.

Finally, he made the fatal mistake which was to lose him his throne and his life. Henry, eldest son of Gaunt, now Duke of Hereford, had quarrelled violently with the Duke of Norfolk in the King's presence. Richard tyrannically banished both from the country (1398). The next year, old John of Gaunt died, and Richard at once declared all his vast possessions forfeit to the Crown. This was an offence against every owner of property, and it roused the nobles against the King. Henry was determined to resist this seizure of his inheritance. He saw his opportunity when Richard went across to Ireland to put down disorder there. In his absence Henry landed in Yorkshire. Nobles flocked to meet him, notably the Percies of Northumberland whom Richard had antagonized and banished from court. Richard on hearing the news tried to return at once, but he was detained by contrary winds, and when at length he landed in Wales, he found that his subjects had rallied round Henry while his own soldiers had deserted him. He surrendered to his cousin at Conway, and was taken to London.

Attack on  
Henry of  
Lan-  
caster

Richard in  
Ireland

Henry,  
lands in  
Yorkshire

Probably Henry, when he first returned, meant to claim only his own estates, but the overwhelming support of all classes, and the universal discontent with Richard's rule, showed him that he could go further. The King was induced to abdicate, and from the Tower where he was imprisoned he sent a paper of abdication to be presented to Parliament.

Richard's  
abdica-  
tion

When the document had been read, Henry stepped forward, and standing before the empty throne, put forward his claim to the Crown. Parliament accepted that claim and he was hailed as King.

Henry  
claims  
the  
crown

A few months later Richard, who had been removed to Pontefract, died. No one knows how, but there can be little doubt that he was put to death. Henry gave him a splendid funeral, and later Henry V gave him a beautiful tomb in Westminster Abbey. His fate was more tragic than that of Edward II, his predecessor, for Richard had greater gifts.

Death of  
Richard

## NOTES ON PERIOD THREE (1216-1399)

### RULERS OF ENGLAND

HENRY III (1216-1272)  
EDWARD I (1272-1307)  
EDWARD II (1307-1327)  
EDWARD III (1327-1377)  
RICHARD II (1377-1399)

### RULERS OF SCOTLAND

ALEXANDER II (1214-1249)  
ALEXANDER III (1249-1286)  
MARGARET (The Maid of Norway) (1286-1290)  
THE FIRST INTERREGNUM (1290-1292)  
JOHN (Balliol) (1292-1296)  
THE SECOND INTERREGNUM (1296-1306)  
ROBERT I (Bruce) (1306-1329)  
DAVID II (1329-1371)  
ROBERT II (1371-1390)  
ROBERT III (1390-1406)

### IMPORTANT FOREIGN RULERS

FRANCE: PHILIP II (1180-1223)  
LOUIS IX (1226-1270)  
PHILIP VI (1328-1350)  
JOHN (1350-1364)  
CHARLES VI (1380-1422)  
EMPEROR: FREDERICK II (1215-1250)

### NOTE 22.— MISRULE OF HENRY III

1. During Henry's minority, *Hubert de Burgh* governed the kingdom, and ruled well, putting down disorder.
2. When Henry came of age he chose bad advisers, notably *Peter des Roches*, and under the influence of *Queen Eleanor* of Provence, foreigners poured into the country.

3. Henry accepted the throne of Naples for one of his sons, and involved England in war in Naples, as the ally of the papacy.
4. Against continued misrule, the barons protested, and in a meeting at Oxford drew up the *Provisions of Oxford* (1258).

This set up a council of 15 to govern the realm, and this council was to consult with another 12, chosen by the barons, to redress grievances, and with yet another 12 to supervise finance.

The meeting at Oxford was later called "the Mad Parliament" but it was really just a meeting of the chief barons, led by *Simon de Montfort*.

5. The government by committee failed, and Simon headed open rebellion, which triumphed at Lewes.

#### NOTE 23. — EDWARD I: THE GROWTH OF PARLIAMENT

##### 1. Early assemblies.

(a) The *Witan* was an assembly dating back to tribal days, which advised the king. It was composed of the chief men in the kingdom. In early days it chose the person to succeed to the crown, e.g. the *Witan* offered the crown to Canute and to William the Conqueror.

(b) William I used his "council" to advise him. This was a feudal assembly.

##### 2. Early use of representatives.

(a) The Normans used representatives to give local information to officials, e.g. *Domesday Book* was based on information given by the priest, the reeve, and men from each vill.

(b) Henry II used local representatives to give information in law-suits; the jury in civil and criminal cases.

(c) Henry II and Richard I used local representatives to assess property for taxation, e.g. the Saladin tithe and Richard's ransom, and the Assize of Arms.

(d) The Church used representatives in its assemblies.

##### 3. Representative Assemblies.

(a) Under *John* representatives had been called from the shires to a meeting at St Albans (1213).

(b) During Henry III's minority representatives of the shires had frequently been called to discuss grants of money.

(c) *Simon de Montfort* in 1265 called an assembly of representatives consisting of 2 Knights from each shire, and 2 citizens from certain cities, and 2 burgesses from certain boroughs. Note that he only called representatives from towns which favoured his cause, and there were no representatives of the clergy.

4. **The Model Parliament.** After various experiments, in 1295 Edward I called a representative assembly which has been considered the first fully representative Parliament. To it came:

- (a) all barons, earls, bishops, and certain abbots summoned individually as tenants-in-chief. This is still the procedure in calling together the House of Lords.
- (b) The sheriffs were bidden to summon meetings in every shire to elect representatives (2 for each shire). The boroughs also chose representatives, 2 for each borough.
- (c) The clergy were represented by proctors chosen by diocesan assemblies of the clergy.

Note that representatives of the shires sat together with the representatives of the merchants and of the lesser clergy. Hence we do not get our assembly divided into "estates" as in France.

#### NOTE 24.—EDWARD I AND THE ENGLISH LAW

Edward's legislation is of great importance. His land laws have regulated the basis of our land-owning system down to modern times.

1. He checked or removed the feudal influence which led to the evil power of the barons.

The statute *Quia Emptores* (1290) stopped "sub-infeudation". That is to say, if land were bought, the purchaser became the vassal of the over-lord, and not of the person who had sold to him.

2. He prevented land from passing into the control of the Church, or corporate bodies by *Mortmain* (1279) which prevented land passing to the Church in such a way that the lord would lose his feudal dues of marriage, wardship, and inheritance. Special leave had to be obtained for lands to go to the Church, though this was often granted.
3. He checked the splitting up of the estates by *De Donis* (1285) which allowed a man to create an "entail" and pass on his property intact to his heir.
4. He checked the private courts of justice of the barons by *Quo Warranto* writs, which obliged a lord to produce documents proving his right to hold such courts. Most lords could not produce such documents.

#### NOTE 25.—EDWARD I AND AN EARLY GREAT BRITAIN

1. **The Conquest of Wales.**

- (a) *Llewelyn* of Wales had opposed Simon de Montfort. In 1277 Edward sent an expedition and defeated him, but took no severe measures.
- (b) In 1282 *Llewelyn* joined his brother David in rebellion. Edward defeated him and conquered all North Wales.



- (c) By the *Statute of Rhuddlan* (1284), Wales was divided into shires, and at the same time Edward made his own heir the first Prince of Wales. He left the Principality with its own speech, laws, and customs.
2. The attempted conquest of Scotland.
- (a) Edward first tried to unite England and Scotland by marriage, but the death of the little Scottish Queen stopped this (1290).
- (b) The disputes over the Scottish succession decided by Edward in favour of *Balliol* (1292). Edward insisted on recognition of his overlordship of Scotland, and he tried to force the Scots to come and fight for him in France (1294).
- (c) National feeling was roused against him, and Balliol allied with France (1295). Edward defeated Balliol and declared *Scotland annexed*.
- (d) The Scots rose under *William Wallace*, and defeated Edward's troops at *Stirling* (1297), but Wallace was then defeated at *Falkirk* (1298). War continued till 1305 when Wallace was captured and executed.
- (e) *Robert the Bruce* now took Wallace's place as leader and was crowned King. Fresh revolts broke out. In 1307 Bruce won many victories, and Edward started from England to fight against him, but died on the way.

## NOTE 26. — MISRULE OF EDWARD II

Due to the personal character of the King, and his rule by favourites.

1. Edward was influenced first by *Piers Gaveston*, and the nobles could not put up with his misrule. In 1310 the Council appointed a committee, called the *Lords Ordainers*, to govern. Gaveston was exiled, but returned, was captured, and executed (1312).
2. **Loss of Scotland.**  
Edward II marched north, but his army was totally defeated at *Bannockburn* (1314) and Scotland regained her independence (Treaty of Northampton, 1328).
3. Thomas of Lancaster, uncle of the King, took advantage of the discontent over Bannockburn and headed a party against the King. Edward, to strengthen himself made friends with Lancaster's enemies the *Despensers*. In 1322 he defeated Lancaster at *Boroughbridge* and beheaded him.
4. The rule of the *Despensers* was unpopular, and the Queen and *Mortimer* plotted against the King in 1326. Edward was captured, the *Despensers* executed, and Edward murdered.

**Note:** The revolts against Edward are rather different from earlier revolts against the king, for they are aimed against the rule of a favourite minister, and they show members of the royal family heading the revolt against the sovereign.

NOTE 27. — EDWARD III AND THE CAUSES OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

1. France took the side of Scotland in her struggle against England, and received David Bruce as a fugitive (1333).
2. **Economic causes:**
  - (a) England traded in wool with Flanders, and the Flemish towns were in revolt against their over-lord the King of France. Edward wished to draw closer to the Flemings.
  - (b) England carried on a great trade in wine with Gascony, and the French frequently threatened to absorb Gascony and so cut off this trade.
3. Edward was involved in perpetual disputes as to the performance of homage to the French king for Gascony.
4. After war began, Edward wished to give the Flemings a good excuse for fighting against France, so he brought forward his claim to the throne of France, and the Flemings could claim to be fighting on behalf of their rightful overlord.

NOTE 28. — DEVELOPMENT OF THE ART OF WAR

1. The English archers used the longbow (originally Welsh). Proved effective at Falkirk (1298). At Dupplin Moor (1332) the Scots put men-at-arms in the centre, and archers on the flanks.
2. At Crécy (1346) Edward III used blocks of men-at-arms with archers pushed forward in between, so as to shoot at the flanks of advancing forces.
3. At Poitiers (1356) the Black Prince used archers as a screen, and men-at-arms behind. A small force then attacked the French flanks.
4. The French invariably attacked in successive "waves", and were shot down by the archers. They never tried a flank attack. Feudal armies as a rule attempted no manœuvres.
5. The English successes were due to their use of a combined force of archers and men-at-arms, but again this force stood on the defensive, and except at Poitiers no effort was made at flank-movements. The important point was that the English men-at-arms fought on foot.

NOTE 29. — CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF THE ENGLISH POWER IN FRANCE

1. After *Treaty of Breigny*, 1360, the English lost vigour. The King was senile, the Black Prince an invalid, and his brothers quarrelsome and incompetent. After the death of Edward III there were perpetual struggles by war factions in England.

2. On the other hand, the French leaders were stronger and more energetic, and the King, Charles V, proved one of the ablest of the French kings. The French became more united in their desire to drive out the invaders.
3. The English lost command of the sea, and thus the French could harry the English garrisons, especially in Gascony.

## NOTE 30. — THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

## Causes:

1. The *Black Death* (1347) had caused a great decline in the number of labourers. The lords tried to check the rise in wages which followed. *Statute of Labourers* (1349) fixed wages at the rate current in 1347.
2. As the price of labour rose, the lords tried to go back to the performance of services as rent, instead of allowing "commutation", i.e. payment of rent in money.
3. Farmers took to *raising sheep* instead of growing corn, and thus threw men out of work, but the unemployed could not get adequate wages owing to the Statute of Labourers.
4. The poll-tax of 1380 was very heavy, and pressed most upon the very poor with large families.

## NOTE 31. — WYCLIF AND THE ANTI-PAPAL MOVEMENT

1. England had always stood out against papal pretensions. William I only allowed papal decrees to be confirmed subject to his consent.  
Edward I had forced the clergy to pay taxes, and defied the pope by outlawing those who refused to pay.  
Under Edward III people objected to "Annates", the payment of the first year's income of all benefices to Rome.
2. The *Friars* had become intensely unpopular, for they were obedient only to the pope, not to the English bishops.
3. The *Papacy* was in ill-repute, owing to the popes having fled from Rome to Avignon, and being under French influence, and in 1378 came the *Great Schism* when two popes were elected.  
The Council of Pisa (1404) tried to end the schism by declaring both popes illegally elected and choosing a third, but as neither of the others would resign his claim, matters were even worse.
4. In 1351 Statute of *Provisors* forbade priests to accept appointments made by the pope "providing" them with benefices before the actual holder was dead. Statute of *Præmunire* (1353) forbade appeals to the papal court.
5. Against the abuses of the papacy and of the friars *Wyclif* began to preach:
  - (a) He denounced "annates" and "pluralities", i.e. the holding of more than one benefice.

- (b) He founded "Poor Priests" to go about and teach the people.
  - (c) He encouraged the use of English, not Latin, in his tracts, and he *translated the Bible into English*.
  - (d) Finally he went further and taught that "Dominion is founded on grace", which meant obedience should not be given to a bad man, priest, pope, or king.
6. This caused the Crown to join the papacy in suppressing Wyclif's teaching, and he fell into disgrace.

NOTE 32.—MISRULE OF RICHARD II: FACTIONS DURING HIS REIGN

1. **First phase:**

- (a) During the latter years of Edward III, his sons had struggled for supremacy; the Black Prince's party had been opposed by John of Gaunt's party.
- (b) During Richard's minority, *John of Gaunt* was very powerful. Held Duchy of Lancaster, earldom and duchy of Leicester, and his son held dukedom of Hereford.  
Gaunt favoured Wyclif, and supported him in his reforms. Richard II opposed Wyclif, and persecuted the Lollards. Gaunt was blamed for the Peasants' Revolt, and withdrew to Spain, where he claimed the throne of Castile.
- (c) *Henry*, Gaunt's eldest son, Earl of Derby (later Duke of Hereford) then joined the opposition party. After 1386 Richard's extravagance and misgovernment made him unpopular. Derby joined with Thomas, *Duke of Gloucester* and their party, the *Lords Appellant*, overthrew the King's friends and forced him to accept their domination. Richard's friends, de Vere and de la Pole, executed by the Merciless Parliament (1388). [Compare with Edward II who in the same way was forced to accept the Lords Ordainers.]

- 2. **Second phase.** In 1389 Richard asserted himself and dismissed the Lords Appellant. He governed peaceably, and apparently successfully, for eight years.
- 3. **Third phase.** Richard, who had great ability and originality, wished now to end the long hostility to France. He made an alliance with the French king, and married the French king's daughter Isabella. Gloucester headed the party which wanted war. Richard attacked and overthrew his enemies; Gloucester died in prison and the other opposing lords were executed or banished. [Compare with Edward II who overthrew the Lords Ordainers.]
- 4. **Last phase.** Richard now acted as a despot and became universally detested. His rule was in great contrast with his earlier better government, and his violence and rage grew upon him.

He first banished Henry of Derby (now Duke of Hereford) and at

Gaunt's death he seized all his territories which should have passed to Henry as elder son. Henry came to England and deposed Richard, who died in prison. [Compare Edward II who after *his* triumph ruled so badly, was deposed, and murdered in Berkeley Castle.]

**Note:** Richard believed in "divine right" of kings, and ruled as a despot, and was overthrown not by popular rebellion, but by action of his cousin who was supported by the nobility and the Church.

# TIME CHART FOR PERIOD THREE (1215-1399)

| Sovereign.               | Events in Britain  | Date. | Events Abroad.   | Date. |
|--------------------------|--|-------|--|-------|
| Henry III<br>(1216-1272) | Henry marries Eleanor of Provence.   | 1236  | Thomas Aquinas born.   | 1225  |
|                          | Simon de Montfort leads opposition.  | 1257  | Death of St. Francis of Assisi.  | 1226  |
|                          | "Mad Parliament" at Oxford.  | 1258  | Louis IX King of France goes on Sixth Crusade.                                 | 1248  |
|                          | Battle of Lewes.   | 1264  |  |       |
|                          | Simon de Montfort summons Parliament; Battle of Evesham; Death of Simon.   | 1265  | Birth of Dante.  | 1265  |
|                          | First Welsh War.   | 1277  |  |       |
|                          | "Quo Warranto" (Statute of Gloucester).  | 1278  | Teutonic Knights conquer Prussia.  | 1280  |
|                          | Statute of Mortmain.   | 1279  |  |       |
|                          | Conquest of Wales.   | 1282  |  |       |
|                          | Statute of Rhuddlan.   | 1284  |  |       |
| Edward I (1272-1307)     | Death of Alexander III of Scotland.  | 1286  |  |       |
|                          | Statute of <i>Quia Emptores</i> (Westminster the 3rd); Treaty of Brightham; Death of Maid of Norway; Jews expelled from England. | 1290  | Capture of Acre by Moslems puts an end to Christian Kingdoms of the Holy Land. | 1291  |
|                          | Balliol King of Scotland, vassal of Edward I.  | 1292  |  |       |
|                          | Model Parliament; Balliol repudiates Edward's overlordship.  | 1295  | Boniface VIII issues bull " <i>Clericis laicos</i> "                           | 1296  |
|                          | Invasion of Scotland; Battle of Dunbar.  | 1296  |  |       |
|                          | Rise of William Wallace; Battle of Stirling Bridge;  | 1297  |  |       |
|                          | Confirmation of the Charters.  | 1298  |  |       |
|                          | Battle of Falkirk.   | 1305  |  |       |
|                          | Execution of Wallace.  | 1306  | First meeting of States-General in France.                                     | 1302  |
|                          | Robert Bruce King of Scotland.   | 1311  | Pope Clement VII establishes Papacy at Avignon.                                | 1305  |
| Edward II<br>(1307-1327) | Lords Ordainers.   | 1311  |  |       |
|                          | Death of Gaveston.   | 1312  |  |       |
|                          | Invasion of Scotland; Battle of Bannockburn.   | 1314  |  |       |
|                          | Execution of Duke of Lancaster.  | 1322  |  |       |
|                          | Deposition of Edward II by Isabella and Mortimer.  | 1327  |  |       |

| Sovereign.             | Events in Britain.   | Date.  | Events Abroad.  | Date.                           |
|------------------------|--|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Edward III (1327-1377) | Fall of Mortimer.<br>Scots defeated at Halidon Hill.<br>Edward claimed throne of France.<br>Outbreak of 100 Years' War.<br>Naval battle of Sluys.<br>Battle of Crécy; Scots invade England, defeated at Neville's Cross.               | 1320<br>1333<br>1337<br>1338<br>1340<br>1346 | Philip VI, first of the Valois kings of France.   | 1328                            |
|                        | Black Death.<br>Statutes of Labourers passed.<br>Battle of Poitiers.<br>Treaty of Bretigny.  | 1348-49<br>1349-60<br>1356<br>1360           | Rienzi revives the Roman Republic.<br>Emperor Charles IV founds University of Prague.<br>Charles IV issues the Golden Bull.<br>Black Prince makes war in Spain on behalf of Pedro the Cruel of Castile. | 1347-54<br>1348<br>1356<br>1366 |
|                        | John of Gaunt in power; Black Prince returns from France.<br>The Good Parliament.  | 1372<br>1376                                 | Papacy returns from Avignon to Rome; The Great Schism in the Papacy (lasted till 1415).<br>Risings in Paris and Flanders.   | 1378<br>1381                    |
|                        | John Wyclif translates the Bible into English.<br>The Peasants' Revolt.<br>The Lollards expelled from Oxford; Death of Wyclif.<br>Rebellion of Gloucester; The Lords Appellant seize power.<br>Richard overthrows the Lords Appellant. | 1380<br>1381<br>1384<br>1387<br>1389         | "War of the cities" in Germany.<br>Turks defeat Serbs at Kossovo.<br>Charles VI of France becomes insane; Quarrels of Burgundians and Armagnacs.  | 1387<br>1389<br>1392            |
|                        | Peace with France.<br>Death of Duke of Gloucester.<br>Henry of Lancaster banished.<br>Death of John of Gaunt; Henry of Lancaster invades England; Deposition of Richard II.  | 1396<br>1397<br>1398<br>1399                 |   |                                 |
|                        |  |  |   |                                 |
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|                        |  |  |   |                                 |
|                        |  |  |   |                                 |
|                        |  |  |   |                                 |
|                        |  |  |   |                                 |
| Richard II (1377-1399) |  |  |   |                                 |



EXAMINATION QUESTIONS ON PERIOD THREE  
(1216-1399)

1. In what circumstances did the friars come to England? What did they do there, and with what results? (LGS 1928)
2. Sketch the character and career of Simon de Montfort. (LGS 1923)
3. Trace the development of Parliament down to the death of Edward I. (LGS 1936)
4. Give an account of the relations between England and Scotland in the reign of Edward I and Edward II. (NUJB 1938)
5. Describe the growth of English commerce, and the importance of the merchant class in the period 1350-1422. (NUJB 1938)
6. Describe the career and show the importance in English history of Simon de Montfort. (LGS 1935)
7. Explain the causes of the 100 Years' War and show how England was affected by it during its course. (LGS 1935)
8. What were the causes and what were the results of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381? (LGS 1937)
9. Describe the main features of English town life in the fifteenth century. (LGS 1937)
10. Give an account of the work of the monasteries in England during the Middle Ages. (NUJB 1937)
11. What were the results of the Black Death? (NUJB 1935)
12. Describe briefly each of the following episodes and point out the connection between them: the Black Death, the Statute of Labourers, and the Peasants' Revolt.
13. Account for the initial success and subsequent failure of the Lollard movement in England. (LGS 1923)

## PERIOD FOUR

### THE MISFORTUNES OF THE MONARCHY — LANCASTER AND YORK

1399-1485

#### CHAPTER 24

#### THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER

##### 1. HENRY IV (1399-1413)

The accession of Henry IV is usually dwelt on as a landmark in our constitutional history. It is said that Richard was deposed as a tyrant. Henry IV accepted the throne as being the choice of Parliament.

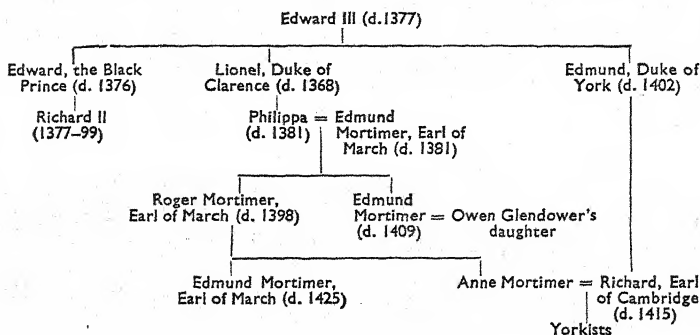
Yet Henry based his claim on his descent "from the good lord King Henry the Third", though his claim was very weak. He never stated plainly whether he based it on the idea that the rival claimant traced descent through a woman. If that were so — and we know English law never denied descent through a woman, Henry II having been King through his mother's claim — Henry might say he was the nearest male claiming descent through males. But in the accepted view, the heir was *Roger Mortimer*, who was descended through his mother from the second son of Edward III, whereas Henry was descended from the third son. Roger had been recognized by Richard II as his heir, but he was killed in Ireland in 1398, and the claims of his little son, Edmund, were disregarded by Henry, though later this Mortimer claim triumphed under the Yorkist kings.

Henry's  
claim to  
the throne

Claim of  
Mortimer

For, though it is important to remember that Henry IV's

title was mainly Parliamentary, yet in essence the struggle was one between one family and another, it was a dynastic contest. This fact is at once plain when we recollect that from 1399 to 1407 Henry IV was never free from rebellion.



The first rising was planned before Richard's death by his half-brothers, the Hollands, Earls of Kent and Huntingdon, who plotted to seize Henry as he was keeping Christmas at Windsor and liberate Richard II from Pontefract. Henry got news of their design, and fled to London. The plotters scattered to raise their retainers, but were all captured. No trial was given them; all were beheaded: and, to prevent any further rebellions with the same object, Henry caused Richard's dead body to be brought to London and displayed there. (Note 33.)

Continuance of the struggle. The Hollands' plot

Death of Richard II

Yet this did not end Henry's troubles — indeed, it only raised up fresh ones. Richard being dead, the Mortimers claimed to be the rightful heirs, and Edmund Mortimer's relations set to work to try to obtain the throne for him.

An ally was found in North Wales, where Richard had many adherents. *Owen Glendower*, a Welsh noble had been engaged in local warfare. Now he broke into rebellion against Henry. The new King led an expedition into Wales, which was a total failure, and he withdrew, leaving Henry Percy, known as Hotspur, to carry on the campaign.

Owen Glendower of Wales

The Percies were allied by marriage to the Mortimers, and they were now rendered discontented by the results of a Scottish war.

The  
Percies

Henry, perhaps anxious to divert attention from home affairs, planned an expedition against the Scots. It achieved nothing, and, in revenge, the Scots, in 1402, invaded England. The task of meeting this invasion fell to the Percies, lords of Northumberland, and one of the wealthiest and most powerful families in England. Harry Hotspur, son of the Earl, was a dashing soldier, and he totally defeated the Scots at *Homildon Hill*, taking many prisoners. The Percies meant to make money by the ransom of their prisoners, but now Henry forbade this. Furious at thus losing the reward of their victory, the Percies decided not to fight Glendower and the Mortimers, but to join them.

Scots  
invade  
England  
(1402)

English  
victory at  
*Homildon  
Hill*

The result was the formation of a grand alliance against Henry. The Percies headed it; their prisoner, the Earl of Douglas, brought in a troop of Scots; Mortimer, an uncle of the young claimant, and Owen Glendower, joined against the common enemy; the alliance was cemented, as usual, by a marriage. Mortimer married Owen's daughter. Their purpose was thus stated by Mortimer, "to restore to King Richard the crown if he be alive; and if not, my honoured nephew who is right heir to the crown of England".

The  
Percies  
discon-  
tented and  
join  
Glendower

The issue was fought out at *Shrewsbury*, the sternest battle seen in England since the days of Hastings. Seven thousand men fell; Hotspur was killed making a last desperate charge. Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, was beheaded two days later. Henry triumphed; the conspiracy was shattered; the Earl of Northumberland submitted to the King, and Henry treated him with more generosity than he deserved. He remembered his old friendship, and forgot his treason: in six months he set "his trusty Mattathias" free, and gave back his lands. The "trusty Mattathias" made an ill use of this clemency. In 1405 he embarked on another conspiracy with Mow-

Battle of  
*Shrews-  
bury*,  
1403. Vic-  
tory of  
the King

Renewed plots by Northumberland, Mowbray, and Scrope, (1405) bray, Earl of Nottingham, and Scrope, Archbishop of York. Eight thousand men gathered in Yorkshire, and Scrope put forth a series of accusations against the King, holding him guilty of winning the Crown by treachery, conniving at Richard's murder, putting men to death without trial, and ruining his subjects by illegal taxation. There was enough truth in these charges to make them intolerable, even if Scrope and his comrades were not actually plotting to dethrone Henry. The rebels dispersed in the belief that the leaders on both sides had come to terms. Nottingham and the Archbishop were seized and beheaded. To put an Archbishop to death for treason was a strong step. Men darkly hinted that Henry's subsequent illness was but the judgment of heaven on his impiety.

Suppression of revolt

In this same year Henry, besides internal plots, had to face invasion. The French planned to combine with Owen Glendower, and send a fleet against England. In addition they stirred up trouble from Scotland. The King, Robert III, now decided to send his son and heir, James, to France. The young prince was captured at sea by Henry's ships, and taken prisoner to London. With this hostage in his hand, Henry had nothing to fear, and James was actually destined to remain a prisoner for nearly twenty years.

French and Scots combine against Henry

James of Scotland a prisoner

The final flare up came three years later when Northumberland, "the trusty earl", escaped. He had been too prudent to be at Shrewsbury, and too cautious to venture, like Scrope, into the enemy's clutches. For a time he made the round of Henry's foes, visiting Scotland, Wales, Flanders, and France. At length he threw away prudence, and tried one more stroke in Yorkshire. Sir Thomas Rokeby, with the local levies, met him at *Bramham Moor*. His force was routed, and he was killed on the field. And with this fight Henry's troubles came practically to an end.

Battle of Bramham Moor. Death of Northumberland (1408)

So the first act in the drama of Lancaster and York — the Hundred Years' Civil War — occupied the reign of Richard II. It ended with the overthrow of the eldest line by the

line of Lancaster. The second act ended at Bramham Moor: it displays a struggle against the usurping Lancastrian carried on by an ambitious family which made a cat-paw of the Mortimer title; and it closed with the triumph of the Lancastrian. But it is impossible not to recognize the true features of the Wars of the Roses proper, revealed in this reign. We have rebellion, treachery, murder, beheading without trial; we have the great northern house of Percy, playing the part afterwards played by the great northern house of Neville, first raising a king to power, then trying to control him, and finally destroying itself in the attempt to overthrow him. And, most significant of all, we have the ready appeal to arms in order to back a quarrel: we have "*livery*" and the "*retainer*".

Victory  
of the  
house of  
Lancaster  
over the  
Percy-  
Mortimer  
alliance

Features  
of the  
Wars of  
the Roses

The "*retainer*" is sometimes described as being "*feudal*". This, strictly speaking, he was not. The essence of feudalism is the giving of service on condition of holding land. The retainer was bound to his lord, not by tenure of land, but by wages. He was not born a retainer; he chose to become one. He accepted service at his master's hands, and wore his badge, his "*livery*". Retainers were, in fact, the substitute for a regular army. When a king wished to go to war he employed his nobles to bring men into the field: in old days they brought their feudal tenants: when feudalism decayed they brought their retainers. Unfortunately these men, who proved a blessing at Crécy and Agincourt, were a curse at home. "*Retained*" by their masters after the war was over, they were employed in time of peace to pursue private quarrels at home, to overawe local tribunals, to terrify juries, to rob the barns and stables of an opponent, and even to defy the king. The disaster to the country lay in this, that the fighting power of the age rested neither in the class which formed the bulk of the nation, nor in the central government which had the interest of the nation at heart, but in the hands of a selfish class of nobles who cared for nothing but themselves.

The  
"re-  
tainer".

"Livery"

While rebellion thus showed how insecure was his hold on the throne, Henry tried to make himself friends in other quarters. He specially wished for the support of the Church, and he tried to win it by persecuting the Lollards. Thus in 1401 Parliament passed a famous statute, "*De Haeretico Comburendo*". By this statute, anyone who was convicted by the Church of heresy could be put to death by burning. Thus for the first time in England men and women could suffer death for their religious opinions, and some of the Lollards did so suffer.

In another direction Henry showed his need for support. Parliament had given him the throne, and he had to realize his dependence. He dared not tax as Richard had done, without Parliament's consent, and now he had to take another step. Hitherto money had been paid in return for promise of reform. Now Parliament drew up "Petitions" which were later called Bills on the lines which they wished to see followed, and the King had to accept these in order to obtain the grants he needed.

Shortly after the victory of Bramham Moor, which gave Henry victory over his enemies, he fell ill. Some said he had contracted leprosy, but whatever his illness, it made him live the life of an invalid. His son, Henry, Prince of Wales, was on bad terms with him. The Prince was leading a riotous and dissipated life, and at the same time longed to attain power. He is said to have urged his father to abdicate, but the King refused. Discord reigned between father and son, until in 1413, death ended Henry's sufferings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He is said to have been told by a soothsayer "You will die in Jerusalem". He was taken ill at Westminster, and was carried to a room which was then, and still is, called "the Jerusalem chamber" after an early picture on its walls. Hearing the name of the room, he declared "my time is come", and did in fact die there.



## 2. HENRY V (1413-1422) — THE FRENCH WAR: SECOND PHASE

Henry V became King in 1413. The wildness and dissipation of his youth now seemed to die down, though we may note that he remained aggressive and harsh.

In spite of the burnings of Henry IV's reign, the Lollards had continued to increase. Their leader was *Sir John Oldcastle*, a soldier who had fought well against the Welsh. He was arrested on Henry's orders and sentenced to be burnt. He escaped, and his followers rallied to him. A plot was formed by the Lollards to meet in St. Giles' fields, and seize the King. The plot was discovered, the gates of London were closed, and the rebellion put down. Oldcastle was captured and burnt.

Henry V  
and the  
Lollards  
  
Old-  
castle's  
plot

Now Henry prepared to embark on a new project for which he may have had various motives. He may have wanted to distract the nation from internal plots by foreign adventure; he may, out of his naturally energetic disposition, have wished for war and adventure; he may have wanted to make the Lancastrian dynasty popular through conquest. In any case, he prepared to revive the French war, and he therefore revived the English claim to the throne of France. His own title was far weaker than that of Edward III, for if descent could be claimed through a woman, as the English urged, then the rightful heir was not Henry, but Edmund Mortimer. Henry, however, disregarded that and boldly claimed the French crown. He was encouraged to do so, and this must have been one of the chief causes of his action, by the state of France herself.

The  
French  
war  
  
Causes of  
Henry's  
attack on  
France  
  
Henry's  
claim

State of  
France

At the very time when Henry IV had seized the crown, and had beaten the alliance of the Percies, Glendower, and the Scots, France was falling into ruin. The king, Charles VI, was mad: the parties of Burgundy and Orleans were quarrelling over the control of the kingdom. The Duke of Burgundy, whose chief dominions were in Flanders, was

Civil war  
in France

**Burgundy and Armagnac** strong in the north-east of France, and was supported by the towns and especially by the lower classes in Paris. The Orleanists or "Armagnacs" were the party of the nobles; their stronghold was south of the Loire. In 1407 the Burgundians murdered the Duke of Orleans, and from that time on the affairs of the country swayed about as first one party and then the other gained the mastery. Henry IV intrigued with both, finally inclining to the Armagnacs, and intending, as the price of his support, to win back the lost English provinces. How hopelessly distracted France was, is revealed when we read that an English army under Clarence landed in Normandy, and was able to march unchecked to Bordeaux.

War flamed out in 1415. Both Commons and clergy gave Henry liberal grants of money. He prepared to sail. Yet **Plots against Henry** on the very eve of his departure, a conspiracy was discovered. *Richard, Earl of Cambridge*, was now married to Anne, the heiress of the Mortimers. He himself was descended from the youngest son but one of Edward III. He and his wife united two claims, and their child would represent the elder line as against the Lancastrians. **Richard of Cambridge and Scrope** plotted with Lord Scrope, a relative of the Archbishop whom Henry IV had beheaded. Both were captured, and with the third conspirator, Sir Thomas Grey, put to death. Richard of Cambridge died on the scaffold, but he left a son, who, as *Richard of York*, was in the future to rebel successfully against Henry's own son, and whose family was to found a new royal dynasty.

Henry set sail with some ten thousand men. He landed **Campaign of Agincourt** in Normandy and besieged *Harfleur*. After a siege of five weeks he took it, but at the cost of about a third of his force. **Siege of Harfleur** It was an unimpressive victory, since no attempt had been made to relieve the town; at this rate it would be long before France was conquered. With no very clear object, save perhaps an imitation of Edward III's policy, Henry set off on a march from Harfleur along the coast to Calais.

Here, in the first period of the war, had the French taken advantage of their chances, he ought to have been beaten. The parties of Burgundy and Orleans had patched up a sort of peace, and, though the Burgundians gave only a lukewarm support, an army was gathering under the Constable D'Albret large enough to crush Henry if it could catch him. Henry was marching as fast as he could, keeping close to the coast; he had even mounted his archers, but the October of 1415 was wet, the roads heavy, and Henry had trouble in crossing the Somme. He had to go a long way up it before he could find a way across, every step taking him farther from Calais. This delay enabled the Constable to cross first, to get between the English and Calais, and to bar Henry's path at Agincourt with 30,000 men (St. Crispin's Day).

Henry's  
march  
to the  
Somme

The Battle of Agincourt bears a certain resemblance to Crécy and Poitiers rolled into one. The French fought on ground far too narrow for their numbers. They allowed the enemy to shelter his weak point, his flanks, by woods; Henry had taken the additional precaution of making the archers supply themselves with long, sharp-pointed stakes which were to be stuck in the ground to check the French charges. The English waited two or three hours in their position at Agincourt and the French did not stir. They were close enough, however, for Henry to be able to compel an attack without losing the advantage of his position. He moved his whole line forward to within range and halted them: the archers fixed their stakes and began to ply the French with their arrows. Thus the French were forced to attack. Their heavily armed knights dismounted and tried to make their way across the muddy ground. They stuck fast, and the English archers shot into the helpless mass. Then the English charged, and the main body of the French was cut down. The rear division broke and fled without waiting to be attacked.

Battle of  
Agincourt  
(1415)

Position  
of the  
armies

French  
attack

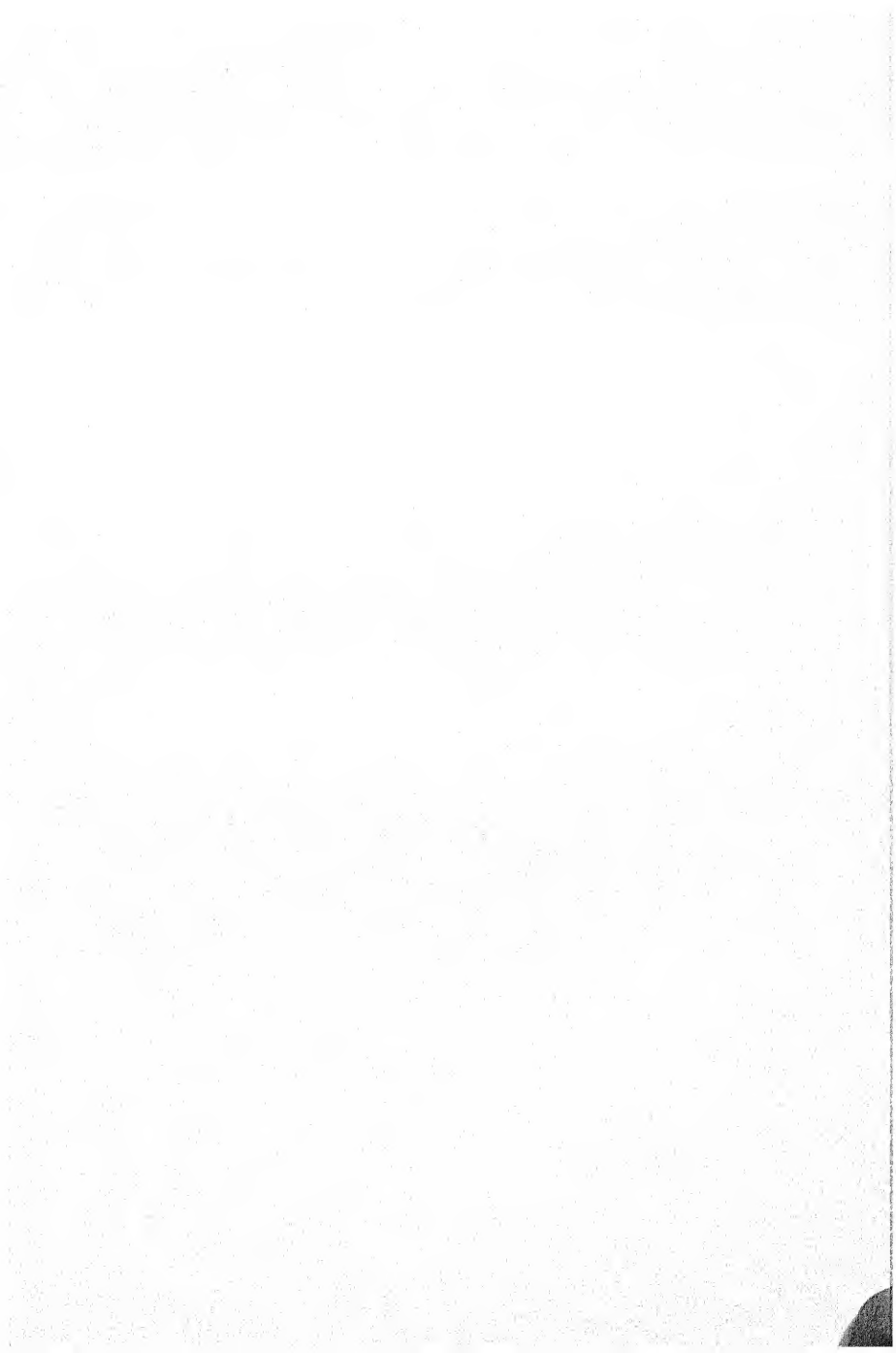
English  
archers'  
victory

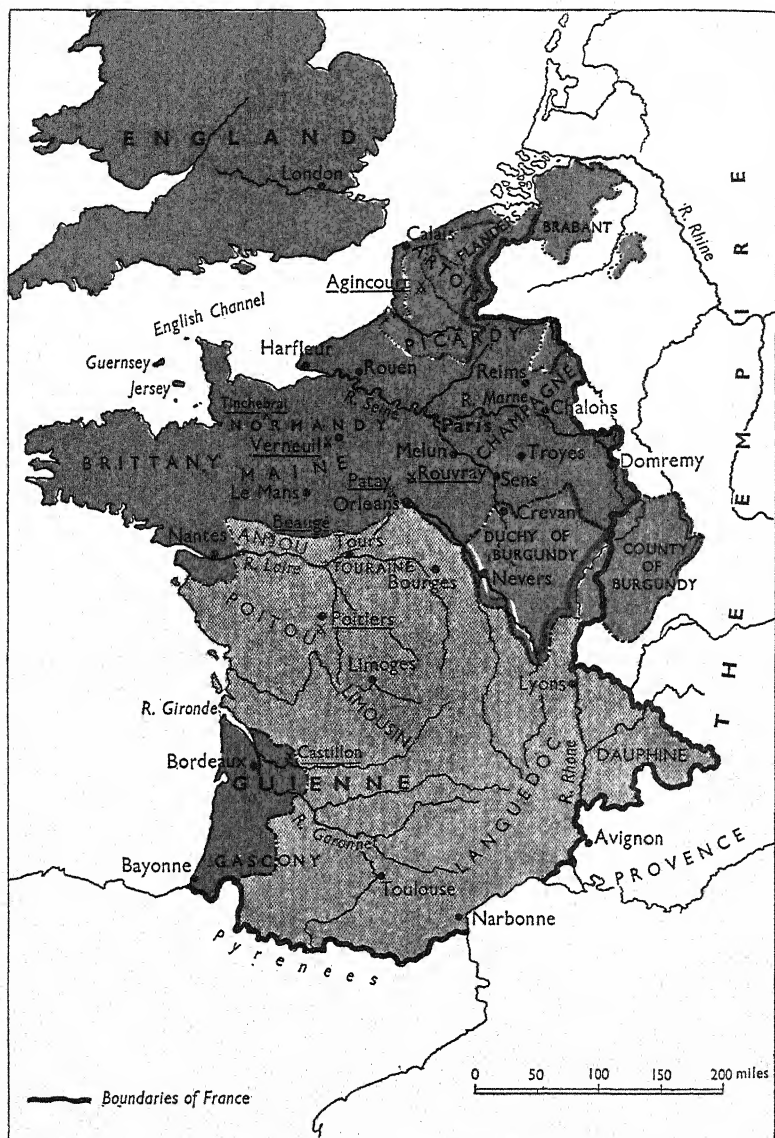
The battle went near to ruin France; there were 8000 of

**Effects of battle** the best blood in France lying dead on the field, among them the Constable, Anthony of Brabant (Burgundy's brother), the Dukes of Bar and Alençon, with the lesser nobility round them in hundreds; and the Duke of Bourbon and Orleans, together with 1500 other knights, were prisoners. England has in the course of her history dealt France many staggering blows on the battlefield. Agincourt is perhaps the most striking of all, not only in the disparity of odds, but in the completeness of the wreckage.

**Ruin of Armagnacs** The blow fell heaviest on the Orleanists. The main share of the dead was theirs, and they took the whole of the dishonour. Burgundy withdrew what lukewarm support he had hitherto given, and Henry was left to pursue his course of conquest. **Siege of Rouen** Three years of sieges followed, in which the most notable was that of *Rouen*, where the women and children turned out by the defenders from the hard-pressed town were callously and cruelly allowed to starve between the walls and Henry's lines. In 1419 Pontoise fell, and there was nothing left to bar Henry's march to Paris.

So far Henry had profited by the military skill which had given him an unexpected triumph over one great French army, and the paralysing disunion between Burgundy and Orleans which had prevented the collecting of another; but hitherto neither faction had actively helped him. Burgundy had remained like Achilles sulking in his tent — a malevolent neutral. Now, however, a piece of supreme and wicked folly was to turn that neutrality into enmity. A meeting was arranged at Montereau between the Burgundians and Armagnacs. **Murder of the Duke of Burgundy** John of Burgundy rashly crossed the barrier on the bridge that severed the two factions. In the sight of his followers he was set on and stabbed by Tannegui du Châtel, a violent Armagnac and friend of the Dauphin. **Burgundians ally with England** It was a retort for the murder of Orleans in 1407. But this treacherous murder threw the Burgundians into the arms of the English. **Treaty of Troyes (1420)** By the *Treaty of Troyes*, Katherine, the daughter of Charles VI, was pledged to Henry in





English Territory

French Territory

Burgundian Territory

# FRANCE IN 1429

marriage: he was recognized as heir to the French throne to the exclusion of the Dauphin; Philip, the new Duke of Burgundy, engaged to support him. In the autumn of 1420 Henry entered Paris in triumph with his bride.

Henry to  
inherit  
French  
throne

The Treaty of Troyes marks the high-water mark of English conquests in France. The English king had married the French king's daughter, in June 1420, and was hailed as his heir. Indeed, everyone expected he would come to the throne. Two years passed, and the King of France was clearly failing in health. Had Henry lived another two months he would have been crowned in Paris. But just two months before the miserable Charles VI passed away, Henry himself fell ill, in August 1422, and while besieging Meaux died at the early age of thirty-five.

Death of  
Henry  
(1422)

### 3. HENRY VI (1422-1461)

#### (i) THE FRENCH WAR—FINAL PHASE

Henry V left a baby son, only nine months old, who was considered heir of both England and France. As Henry V lay dying he showed clearly enough in his last words what was the prop of the English power in France, and the means by which it might be shaken. "I beg you all," said he, "to see that you have no quarrel with my fair brother of Burgundy, and above all to prevent from this my fair brother, Humphrey; for if that arrive, God help us." The friendship of Burgundy was, indeed, the key of the situation. We must see on what this friendship was based, and how it was finally broken.

The  
French  
war

The  
Burgun-  
dian  
alliance

One thing has been seen already; the spirit of revenge for the murder of Duke John. But we must note too the strengthening of foreign alliances by marriages. Just as Henry V had secured the help of the court party by his marriage with Katherine, so Bedford bound the young Duke of Burgundy to him by marrying his sister, Anne of Burgundy. The Burgundian alliance rested more on a family

Marriage  
policy of  
Bedford



bond between the chiefs than on affection between the subjects. Yet a doubter would scarcely take the side of the Armagnacs, for they had, so far, displayed no mark of political capacity. They had failed in everything they attempted. But were circumstances to change: were parties to stand out in their true light: were the prosperous traitors of Burgundians to lose their prosperity, and the unsuccessful patriots of Orleanists to happen on success: then, as if by magic, all would be changed. Each party would be revealed in its naked truth — Orleanist as patriot, Burgundian as traitor, and Englishman as a national enemy.

This magic change came with the coming of the Maid of Orleans, commonly called *Joan of Arc*.<sup>1</sup> She was a peasant girl from Domrémy on the borders of Lorraine, who believed that she had been called by angel voices to deliver her country, drive out the invader, and crown Charles VII at Rheims. She went to Court and persuaded the King to accept her help. Clad in armour, and riding at the head of her troops, by her simple faith and piety she restored the hopes of the French. Salisbury had formed the siege of *Orleans*, the last Armagnac stronghold on the Loire, and was pressing it hard. When the Maid appeared before the town, broke into the city, drove off the besiegers, and defeated Talbot at *Patay*, it was as if the spell which had overcast French arms was broken. Heaven, hitherto averse, had taken pity on the French national cause. Not only was the relief of Orleans an immense military success, for it assured to the Armagnacs a gateway into the northern territory, whence they could harass the English, but its moral effect was still greater. The Maid's career was indeed short. She did see Charles VII crowned at Rheims in the centre of the enemy's country, but her army was beaten off from Paris. In 1430 she was captured at Compiègne, and in the next year burnt as a witch at Rouen. That piece of ferocity did not mend matters. She was dead, but the spirit

Joan of  
Arc, the  
Maid of  
Orleans  
(1429)

Her  
victory  
at Patay  
(1429)

Relief of  
Orleans

Defeat of  
Joan: her  
capture  
and death  
(1431)

<sup>1</sup> Her right name is Jeanne d'Arc.

which she had aroused lived after her. "Before her day," says the chronicler, "two hundred English would drive five hundred French before them; but now two hundred French would beat four hundred English." Perhaps it must not all be put down to the Maid. The fact is that the quality of the French soldiers was improving. The disobedient, clumsy, foolhardy, feudal array no longer came into the field, for the best of reasons: most of it was dead. It was replaced by professional soldiers who knew their work, officered by men who would not run needless risk. Repeated disasters had at last taught the French not to hazard all on a pitched battle. And there was another cause at work. Sooner or later the curse of foreign invasion will weld a country into union. The burning of Joan of Arc did no good to the English cause. The soldier who looked on at the Maid's martyrdom and uneasily muttered, "We have burnt a saint", only voiced what many felt, that a curse had indeed come on the English cause.

Revival of  
French  
military  
strength

Joan of Arc had fought and died. The Armagnac cause was lifting its head. At the same time the union between England and Burgundy began to give way. Henry V had rightly distrusted his "fair brother", Humphrey of Gloucester. Humphrey had already given great offence to the Duke of Burgundy by marrying Jacqueline of Hainault, a vassal whose dominions Burgundy had expected to secure for himself. He even went so far as to lead an army into Hainault against the Burgundians. Still worse was to come. In 1432 Anne of Burgundy, Bedford's wife, died. This of itself was a blow to the alliance, but Bedford made matters worse by marrying the sister of the Count of St. Pol. St. Pol lay on the borders between France and Burgundy; the Count was one of these waverers who took, now one side, now the other. Bedford wished to attach him to England, but he forgot that in doing so he would offend Burgundy. From that moment the Duke began to draw off from the English side. A congress met at Arras in 1435,

Quarrels  
between  
English  
and Bur-  
gundians

Humphrey of  
Gloucester

Congress  
of Arras  
(1435)

when the French offered to cede Normandy and Aquitaine in full sovereignty, if the English would abandon the claim on the throne. These terms — better than those which French terms refused Edward took at Bretigny — were foolishly refused. Thereon Burgundy went over to the French; in the same year Bedford, whose ability alone had kept the English cause together, died. From that time onward the English cause in France was a lost cause.

The eighteen years from 1435 to 1453 form the last stage of the Hundred Years' War, a period of English disaster. Step by step we were beaten back. One small garrison after another was overcome. The year 1436 saw the French regain Paris; and, more ominous still, the Duke of Burgundy besieged Calais. Though all went wrong we showed a wonderful pertinacity in resisting. One noble after another, Warwick, York, Somerset, went to France and failed. One man had the courage to yield some in order to preserve the rest; William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, negotiated a truce, ceded Maine and Touraine, and arranged a marriage between Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou. The peace proved acutely unpopular; it is true that the French would hardly have kept it long, but it was the English who broke it, within four years of its making. Their effort to revive the struggle proved disastrous, for the French king took Rouen (1449), defeated the English at *Formigny*, and captured all Normandy. Suffolk did not survive these disasters; he was impeached and banished, but his enemies did not mean to let him go. They waylaid his ship, seized him, and, using the gunwale of a boat as the block, caused his head to be hewed off (1450).

The truth is, that, in 1450, England had fallen sick of the very disease from which France was recovering — madness in the head and paralysis in the members. For Charles VI we have Henry VI; for Burgundian and Armagnac, York and Lancaster; but the symptoms were the same. The court was surrounded by nobles all seeking their own

advantage; private feuds came before patriotism. Neither party had the energy to stave off further disaster in France, or the moral courage to withdraw. They could only be active in fault-finding.

In 1453 Talbot led some six thousand men to drive off the French force besieging *Châtillon* on the Dordogne. His command was not much less than Henry V's at Agincourt, but he had men of different mettle against him. The French withdrew to their entrenched camp, beat off Talbot's charge, and eventually scattered his whole force in rout. Talbot himself was slain, "very old and worn with years". Gascony, the last remnant of the Angevin Empire, was taken by the French. With Talbot's death a war which was also "very old and worn with years" came to an end. England had lost all her French territory. Nothing now remained to her of the Norman possessions and her later conquests except the Channel Islands and the port of Calais. (*Note 34.*)

Talbot's  
attack

Defeat at  
Châtillon  
(1453)

The close of the Hundred Years' War marks an epoch in English history. We have seen two distinct stages of English wars with France. The first belongs to the reigns of the Norman and Angevin kings, and was the natural result of English kings holding a double position, in being Dukes of Normandy and Aquitaine, Counts of Anjou and Maine. These wars were essentially feudal struggles between a feudal superior and turbulent feudal barons. The second stage is that of the Hundred Years' War, in which both Edward III and Henry V asserted a claim to be Kings of France; one wrested from France the great duchy of Aquitaine in full sovereignty; the other actually won the crown for his son. These were not feudal, but national struggles. It was not the Duke of Normandy against the King of France, but England against France. The enterprise of English politics was turned to conquest in France. France was regarded as the natural field of English expansion. After many ups and downs this policy failed and was abandoned.

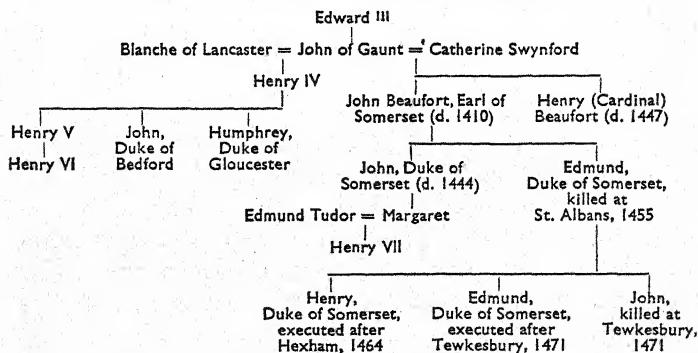
Close of  
the war

Change in  
English  
policy

## (ii) THE WARS OF THE ROSES

We must now turn to the development of affairs in England. For the first twenty-five years of his reign Henry VI was chiefly guided by his uncles, and his cousins the Beauforts. John, Duke of Bedford, was a wise and patriotic statesman, but the care of French affairs gave him no time to mend matters in England. This left the field clear to his brother, Gloucester—that “fair brother Humphrey” whom we have seen Henry V distrust. Gloucester was greedy and self-seeking, and involved himself in bitter quarrels with the Beauforts. This Beaufort family was descended from John of Gaunt through Catherine Swynford.<sup>1</sup> One of them, Henry Beaufort, became Bishop of

## THE HOUSES OF LANCASTER AND BEAUFORT



Winchester and Cardinal: others held, in succession, the title of Earl, and afterwards Duke, of Somerset. All were Lancastrians, as, indeed, was Humphrey of Gloucester, but the two parties were bitterly hostile, struggling for power in the Council of Regency; so far, there was no serious Yorkist party to cause the Lancastrian factions to unite.

In 1445 Henry had married his French wife, Margaret of

<sup>1</sup> The Beauforts were born before John married Catherine. They were made legitimate by a special Act of Parliament but debarred from succession to the throne.

Anjou. In 1447 Gloucester was imprisoned on a charge of treason, and died in prison; no doubt he was murdered. Since Henry VI had as yet no son, *Richard, Duke of York*, son of Richard of Cambridge, became heir to the throne. So far, York had shown no sign of disloyalty. For more than ten years he had held a command in France, and had made a reputation as a good soldier. The Beauforts, however, grew jealous of him. He was removed from his command, and sent into practical banishment as King's Lieutenant in Ireland. Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, superseded him in Normandy (1448).

Death of  
Gloucester  
(1447)

York the  
heir to the  
throne

Then came the hour of the last agony in France. The patched-up truce was foolishly broken. One defeat followed another: failure abroad was visited on the heads of unpopular ministers at home by a series of murders. In 1450 both the Bishop of Chichester and Suffolk were put to death. In June *Jack Cade*, pretending that his name was Mortimer, led the Kentish men in rebellion, and occupied London, murdering, there, the Bishop of Salisbury and Lord Saye, the Treasurer. The idea that York was at the bottom of Cade's rebellion was fostered when he came back suddenly from Ireland just as Somerset returned from Normandy. A Yorkist party grew in strength, posing as the friends of good government, and the opponents of the Beauforts and the Court party. York himself behaved with what may, considering the spirit of his time, be called moderation. He did indeed collect an army in 1452, but he did not fight. When, in 1453, a son was born to Henry VI, thus displacing him from being heir to the Crown, he gave his allegiance to the new prince. In the next year, when King Henry went mad and York was chosen regent, he made no attempt to seize the throne. It was not till the King's recovery brought with it the return to power of his deadly enemy, Somerset, that York actually took the field. He could not do anything else; had he submitted, his fate would probably have been the block.

Disasters  
in France

Death of  
Suffolk

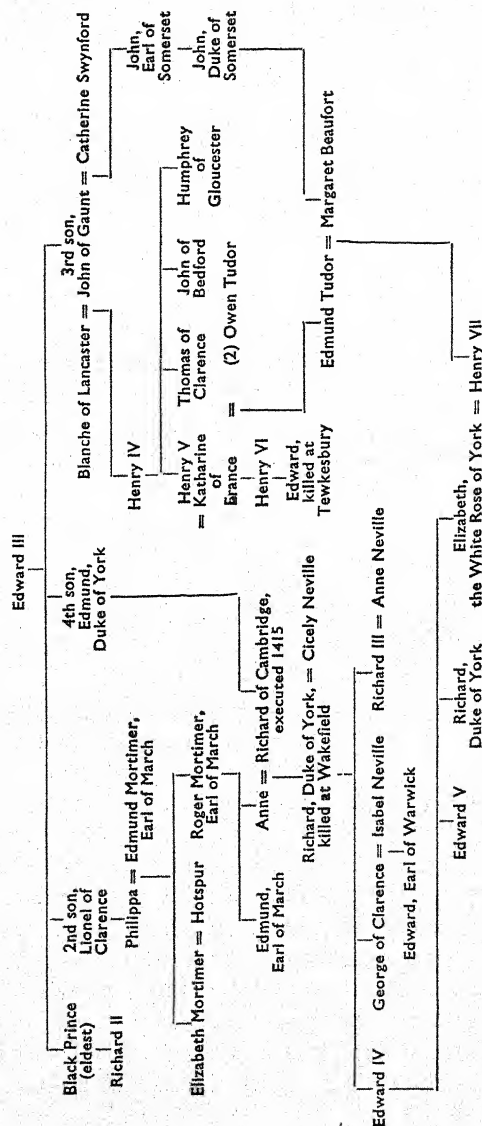
Cade's  
insurrec-  
tion

Rivalry of  
York and  
Somerset

Birth of a  
son to  
Henry VI

York  
takes up  
arms

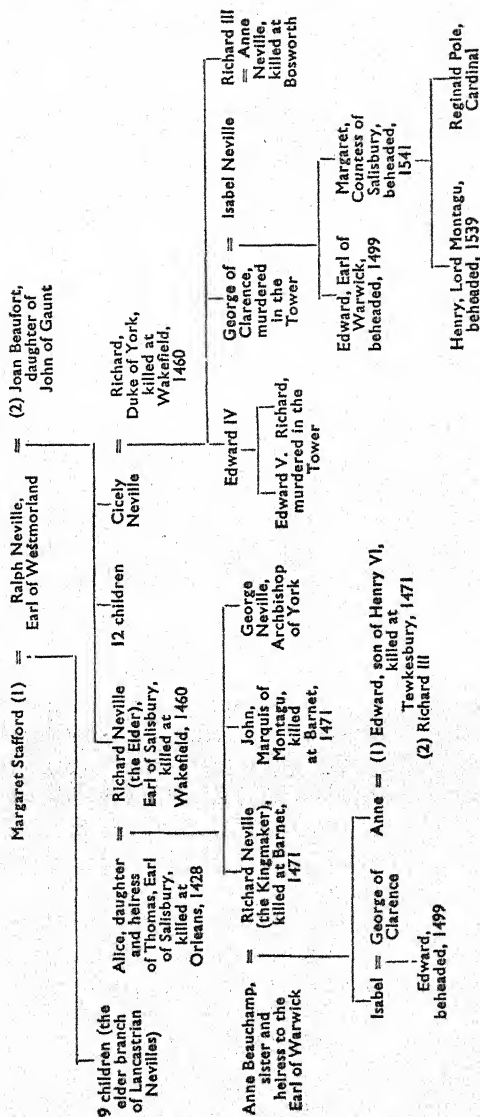
## EDWARD III's DESCENDANTS





## TABLE OF THE NEVILLE FAMILY

**Observe the violent deaths, and especially the misfortunes of the Clarence descendants**



The Wars of the Roses proper, beginning in 1455, fall into four subdivisions. The *first* was a struggle for the regency, and ended in the triumph of York over Somerset at St. Albans. The *second* period began in 1459 with the attempt of Queen Margaret to overthrow the Yorkists, and ended with the accession of Edward IV, the Yorkist triumph at Towton (1461), and the beating down of the Lancastrian resistance in the north. The *third* was marked by the effort of the Nevilles to master the line of York: this failed at Barnet and Tewkesbury (1471). The *last* was ended when Richard III, having alienated a great part of his own supporters, fell victim to an alliance of enemies at Bosworth (1485). (Note 35.)

The first campaign is simple and may be speedily dismissed. It was not so much York against Lancaster as York against Somerset. The object was not yet to seize the Crown: it was a struggle for the regency—the reins of power but not the name. York's army, moving on London, found the King's forces holding *St. Albans*. An attack was made on the little town. The deciding point in the fight came when Warwick and his men, making their way through the houses in St. Peter's Street, burst into the middle of the Lancastrians. Somerset was killed and King Henry captured. As the fruit of victory York again became Protector, and filled the great offices of State with his friends. Somerset being dead, all the blame could conveniently be put on him, and as the Yorkists were profuse in promises of better government, it might be hoped that the country would settle down.

Henry VI, gentle and pious, would never have provoked further trouble. But his queen, Margaret of Anjou, was fierce as her husband was meek. In spirit, resource, courage, resolution, and in the bad side of these qualities, ambition, guile, ferocity, mercilessness, the "she-wolf of France" was a match for any baron of the time. There was nothing of the softer sex about her. In an age full of treason and

Sub-  
division of  
the Wars  
of the  
Roses

1. York  
against  
Somerset.  
Battle of  
St.  
Albans  
(1455)

Death of  
Somerset.  
Henry VI  
a prisoner

Margaret  
of  
Anjou

brutality Margaret was treacherous and ruthless above the rest. To cast discredit on the Yorkist lords she did not scruple to invite French marauders into England: she even advised them where they might land, sack, burn, and kill without fear of resistance. While Henry could not bear to look on the quartered remains of a traitor, perched on Cripplegate, saying, "I will not that any Christian man be so cruelly used for me", Margaret would have agreed with Louis XI's maxim that there was "no perfume to match the scent of a dead traitor". After the second battle of St. Albans she bade her son Edward, then eight years old, choose what death two Yorkist prisoners should die. The boy's answer, "Let their heads be taken off", must have delighted his mother.

As Margaret was the mainstay of the Lancastrians, so were the *Nevilles* of the Yorkist side. At first sight two things are perhaps surprising about these Nevilles. To begin with, the grandfather of Neville the Kingmaker, Ralph, Earl of Westmorland, was a Lancastrian; and so was his second wife, Joan Beaufort, the Kingmaker's grandmother, being a daughter of John of Gaunt. Thus the Nevilles were of that large and dangerous class, royal cousins; but we should hardly expect to find them on the Yorkist side. Secondly, since Richard Neville, the Kingmaker's father, was indeed only the elder son of a *second* family, and there were nine children in the first family, it does not seem likely that he would inherit wide estates. The answer which explains both the sympathies and the power of the Nevilles can be given in two words — fortunate marriages.

The  
Nevilles  
support  
York

Ralph Neville and his second wife Joan Beaufort had fourteen children: no inconsiderable number to add to the nine in the first family. Ralph, the father of this multitude, did the best he could for them. He left to his widow his Yorkshire lands, and she in her turn took care that they should pass to her eldest son, Richard, thus depriving the elder branch of what they considered their rights. Richard

The  
Neville  
marriages

Salisbury and York married Alice Montacute, heiress of the Earl of Salisbury; and his youngest sister, Cicely, married Richard Duke of York. Here is the beginning of the fortunes of the younger Nevilles: here is the explanation why they take the Yorkist side, all the more eagerly since the first family with whom they had quarrelled was Lancastrian.

The Earl of Salisbury was killed at the siege of Orleans, and Richard Neville, in right of his wife, became Earl of Salisbury, and added the Montacute lands to his own Yorkshire inheritance. His eldest son, named like his father, Richard and destined to be called the Kingmaker, married Anne, daughter, and, as it proved, heiress, of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. Thus *Richard Neville* the younger became, in right of his wife, "Earl of Warwick, Newburgh, and Aumarle, Premier Earl of England, Baron of Stanley and Hanslape, Lord of Glamorgan and Morgannoc", master of the Despenser lands in South Wales, the Beauchamp lands in Gloucestershire, Warwick, Oxfordshire and Buckingham, with scattered holdings in seventeen other counties all over the length and breadth of England. More than a hundred and fifty manors were his. By this amazing stroke of luck, the boy of twenty-two became far

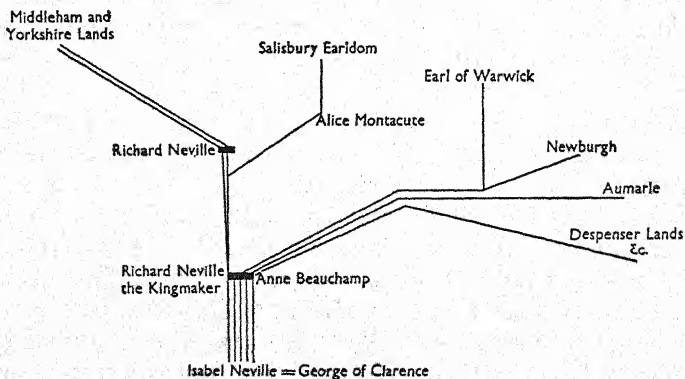


Diagram of the Neville Power

more powerful than his father. Yet ten years later his father's inheritance came to him also, when Richard the elder fell at Wakefield. When we add his other relationships: that his uncles and aunts were allied in marriage to the house of Fauconbridge, Latimer, Abergavenny, Mowbray, and Stafford; that his sisters were married into the houses of Arundel, Tiptoft, Stanley, Bonville and de Vere; that even the church had one Neville Bishop of Durham, and another Bishop of Exeter;<sup>1</sup> that his uncle by marriage, Richard, Duke of York, was Protector of the Realm, and ready to give any of the great offices into Neville hands, then the catalogue nears an end. It may seem a somewhat wearisome catalogue. Yet the recital of it serves a purpose if it impresses on the mind the amazing position held by Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. One thing remains to be said, namely, that the man himself had all the qualities of a leader. He was a cautious and sensible statesman, an adequate general, ambitious but not without principle, firm yet not cruel, able from the early days of manhood to use the power which lay in his hands. We shall no longer be surprised that this Neville of a younger branch is called "*The Kingmaker*". We might go further; we might almost call the years 1460 to 1471 the "reign of Richard Neville".

Warwick's relations

Warwick's abilities

Second phase

It is needless to go fully into all the politics and warfare of this troubled time. All that can be done is to outline them, dwelling on the more salient points. Since the overthrow at St. Albans Margaret never ceased plotting, but it was not till 1459 that she felt strong enough to risk a blow. Even then the Lancastrians were beaten at *Bloreheath*; but they had their revenge a month later, when the Yorkist force deserted wholesale at *Ludford*, and the leaders had to flee the country, Warwick and Salisbury to Calais, York to Ireland. In 1460 they returned, defeated the Lancastrians at *Northampton*, when Lord Grey de Ruthyn turned traitor and

Margaret's counter-stroke (1459)

<sup>1</sup> And later Archbishop of York.



ENGLAND, 1327-1485

helped the Yorkists over the fortifications in the Lancastrian lines. Henry himself taken prisoner was the chief prize of the victory, and the Duke of York appearing in London began to set forward his claims to the throne. In the meantime Margaret and Lord Clifford were gathering fresh levies in the north. The Duke, marching north to meet them, was caught with an inferior force, defeated, and killed at *Wakefield*. A paper crown set on his head over the gates of York was Margaret's derisive answer to his hopes of a kingdom.

York  
claims  
the throne

Battle of  
Wakefield  
(1460)

Wakefield fight cleared away two fathers to make room for two abler sons. Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, left his cause to his son *Edward, Earl of March* (later to be Edward IV). Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, less fortunate even than his master, for he was taken prisoner and beheaded in cold blood, gave place to Richard his son, Warwick the Kingmaker. At first the Yorkist cause seemed desperate. Margaret's army, now swollen to a huge force, rolled southward plundering and burning. The Yorkists were scattered, Warwick struggling to cover London, and Edward was far away in the west, where he had been winning the battle of *Mortimer's Cross*. Margaret came on Warwick at *St. Albans* and beat him. Again treachery had much to do with the result; a Kentish squire named Lovelace went over to the Lancastrians, and left a gap in the Yorkist lines, through which the enemy passed. The Yorkists fled in confusion: next day Warwick had not above a sixth of his army with him. This crushing defeat coming on the top of Wakefield seemed fatal. The King had been once more taken prisoner — this time by his friends. Everyone expected that a few days would see Margaret in London and Henry VI on the throne again.

Edward  
of York

Edward  
wins  
Mortimer's  
Cross

Warwick  
defeated  
at second  
battle of  
St. Albans  
(1461)

The chance was lost. Margaret dawdled; London — accustomed to become the prize of war — was willing to yield if only it could escape being entered by the Northerners, and King Henry persuaded his wife to agree.

Margaret's  
failure



The respite given allowed Warwick first to join Edward, and then to return at full speed to London. The Lancastrians retreated northwards, the first step in a lost cause. Years were to pass before fate would be again kind and the wasted opportunity return.

Less than six weeks saw the Lancastrian cause in the dust. Edward, now acknowledged King, pursued Margaret's army northwards and encountered it at *Towton*. This was the sternest fight in all the battles of the Roses, and it ended in the total annihilation of the Lancastrian army.

Edward  
IV: vic-  
tory at  
Towton  
(1461)

Escape of  
Margaret

Struggle  
in the  
north.  
Hexham  
(1464)

One thing would have made Towton absolutely decisive — the capture of Margaret. Margaret, however, escaped, and for the next three years kept up a desultory struggle in the north. She got help from the Scots and the French. The fighting went on round the great castles of Alnwick, Bamborough, and Dunstanborough. Warwick and his brother, John Neville, Marquis Montagu, at length captured these strongholds, and in the battles of *Hedgeley Moor* and *Hexham* shattered the last of the Lancastrians. After Hexham, Montagu enforced his victories by beheading all the Lancastrian leaders in his hands. Among them fell Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset.

## CHAPTER 25

### EDWARD IV (1461-1483) AND RICHARD III (1483-1485)

#### 1. EDWARD IV — THE YORKISTS ON THE THRONE

The Yorkists had now nothing to fear but themselves. Hitherto the alliance of York and Neville, united by a common foe, had proved irresistible; but, the danger over, the interests of the two drifted apart. Edward of York had won the throne and became king as Edward IV; but what reward could be enough for the man who put him there?

Edward  
of York  
becomes  
king

To owe too much is the strongest temptation to repay nothing. A king cannot endure the continual presence of a Kingmaker. The thought must be present to the minds of both that it is even easier to unmake than to make.

Thus the third period of the war, from 1464 to 1471, covers the alienation of the house of Neville from the house of York, sees the alienation turn into open enmity, and ends with the death of the Kingmaker and the second triumph of Edward IV — this time over a Neville-Lancaster coalition.

Quarrel  
of York  
and  
Warwick

Third  
phase of  
the war

As soon as Edward IV found the Nevilles were no longer useful, he perceived how dangerous they were. He set himself to break free from their control, and began by delivering a snub to Warwick. He allowed him to busy himself over negotiating a marriage for him with a French princess.<sup>1</sup> Edward must have smiled at the diligence Warwick displayed, since he was, as a matter of fact, already secretly married to a lady of no high rank, Elizabeth Woodville, widow of a Lancastrian knight, Sir John Grey. When the news was at last revealed by the King, Warwick was left to swallow the snub as best he could. This was not all. Edward followed it up by promoting all his wife's relations.

Edward  
IV's  
policy

The  
Woodville  
marriage

The Woodvilles were to rise as a counterpoise to the Nevilles, and by the same means — royal favours and politic marriages. In 1467 the breach became open. George Neville, the Archbishop of York, was dismissed from the Chancellorship, and Lord Rivers, the Queen's father, put in his place; then the King persuaded the Duchess of Exeter to break off her intended match with Warwick's nephew, and marry instead John Grey, the Queen's eldest son. To complete Warwick's disgrace, the King sent him overseas to prepare a match for his sister, Margaret of York, with a French prince, and, directly he was out of the way, betrothed her to the son of the chief enemy of France, the Duke of Burgundy.

Disgrace  
of  
Warwick

<sup>1</sup> Bona of Savoy, sister to Louis XI's queen.

Marriage schemes
 Once more we observe how completely the politics of the time were marriage politics. Each side strove by success in marriage to win wealth and estates, because estates and wealth meant retainers and military power; and in days when men of noble family so often died in battle or on the scaffold<sup>1</sup> there were plenty of marriageable and wealthy widows. No match was too sordid, so long as it were profitable; witness John Woodville, aged twenty-two, marrying the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, aged eighty, old enough to be his grandmother; witness, again, Warwick's counter-stroke to Edward's exalting of the Woodvilles. He tempted George of Clarence, the King's brother, into prospective treason by offering the hand of his own daughter, heiress of his estates, Isabel Neville; and Clarence accepted the bribe.

Rebellion in the north
Warwick joins rebels
Edward captured at Edgecote Field
 Affairs were once more reaching a point when the only decision could be by the sword. Lancastrian partisans again appeared in the country. In 1469 the whole of South Yorkshire burst into rebellion under Sir John Conyers, a relation of Warwick's by marriage. At Edward's summons Warwick himself came over from Calais, with George Neville and the Duke of Clarence (now his son-in-law) with him. Far from helping Edward, Warwick raised a force against him. Some of the King's soldiers went over to the Neville side; the force under Lord Herbert, who remained loyal, was shattered by Conyers at *Edgecote*. Edward himself was captured at night by George Neville and a party of Warwick's men-at-arms.

Warwick's triumph shortlived
 Warwick had the game in his hands, but was just too honourable to win it. He might have put Edward to death, and once more played the part of a kingmaker, this time for his son-in-law, Clarence's, benefit. Yet, though doubtless Edward would have had no hesitation in ordering Warwick's head off, Warwick was more scrupulous. He contented himself with taking vengeance on the Woodvilles,

<sup>1</sup> See the Neville table on p. 249; and also the Beaufort table on p. 246.

two of whom he caused to be beheaded; from the King he exacted no more than promises. Probably, over-confident of his own strength, he thought that he had given Edward a sufficient lesson. In a sense he had, yet scarcely what he intended. He had wished to discipline a young man, but he had created an implacable enemy, all the more dangerous that the pupil had taken the lesson with a smiling countenance.

Then came a year of revolutions. In March, 1470, Edward collected forces to subdue a rising in Lincolnshire, and turning suddenly on Warwick and Clarence, forced them to flee overseas. In France they found the scattered remains of the Lancastrian party, with the dauntless Margaret of Anjou at their head. Strange were the privations they had gone through, the young prince "begging from house to house", the Queen, without money, baggage, or gowns, sharing a herring for the food of herself and her son, and reduced to borrow from a Scottish archer, met by chance at the service of the mass, who, "rather loath, drew a Scots groat from his purse, and lent it to her". Louis XI saw his chance of striking a counterblow at Edward to punish him for his alliance with Burgundy. He persuaded Warwick and Margaret to come to terms. It was not easy to reconcile the two who for twenty years had been the bitterest of foes, but in such tortuous policy Louis XI was a master. Warwick at length declared for King Henry, and crowned the alliance with the usual betrothal, this time of his daughter Anne to Margaret's son, Prince Edward. At first fortune smiled on this perfidious alliance. In September Warwick and Clarence landed in the west; again Edward's men deserted him. He narrowly escaped capture at the hands of Montagu, Warwick's brother, and hastily fled from Lynn to Burgundy. Henry VI was taken from the Tower, "not cleanly kept, as should seem such a prince", newly arrayed, and set once more on a puppet throne.

Then the wheel went round again. Edward gathered

Edward's  
success  
(1470)

Warwick  
and  
Clarence  
ally with  
Margaret  
of Anjou

Louis XI  
supports  
Margaret

Return of  
Warwick.  
Restora-  
tion of  
Henry VI.  
Flight of  
Edward  
IV

Edward's return (1471) his men, and landed at Ravenspur. He had but 300 with him; Richard of Gloucester arrived in the Humber mouth with another 200; Earl Rivers brought another handful. It seemed a hopeless enterprise to unmake the Kingmaker with so small a force. Yet Ravenspur was of good omen as a starting-point for a cast at a throne, "since even in the same place the usurper Henry of Derby landed after his exile". The parallel goes closer; even as Henry of Derby gave out that he came only to claim his rightful Duchy of Lancaster, so Edward of March announced that all he sought was his Dukedom of York; as the one adventurer became Henry IV, the other established himself as King Edward IV. (*Note 36.*)

Edward's march south shows what courage and fortune may do. Montagu missed him, and followed too slowly in pursuit. Warwick drew in Clarence, to stop him in the Midlands, but Clarence went over to his brother. The Kingmaker prepared to defend his own castle of Warwick; Edward marched straight to London. Then, as Warwick followed, Edward again came northwards, and met him at *Barnet*. The battle, fought in a dense fog, which caused the wing of each army to overlap the other, was decided more by chance than skill. The Earl of Oxford's Lancastrians, after driving off their Yorkist opponents, lost their way, and came back on the rear of their own force. Their badge, the "Radiant Star", was mistaken for Edward IV's badge, the "Sun with Rays", and they were greeted with a shower of arrows. At once a cry of "Treachery!" ran all down the line. Treachery was what all the array of Nevilles and Lancastrians had expected; none trusted the other, since times without number they had been foes. Immediately their ranks were broken. Warwick himself paid the usual penalty of a lost battle — being killed "something flying" in the chronicler's words. Heavy armour made battle safe, but defeat fatal.

Fortune indeed had turned her back on the Neville cause

at last; for a month Margaret had been on the French shore waiting to cross; for a month a great storm had held her prisoner. She landed at Weymouth too late, on that same Easter Day which saw Warwick fight his last fight at Barnet. Her help, which would have changed the fate of that day, was now useless. She turned westwards, but on 4th May was overtaken and beaten at *Tewkesbury*. There, in the pursuit through the "Bloody Meadow", Prince Edward fell, vainly begging for mercy. Somerset was taken prisoner and executed, adding one more victim to the roll of his luckless house. No male was left to the line of Lancaster, and the Yorkists may have rejoiced at the extinction of their hereditary enemies. They had still, however, to reckon with one descendant of the female line, a boy named Henry Tudor, then fourteen years old.<sup>1</sup>

Landing  
of  
Margaret

The defeat  
at  
*Tewkes-*  
*bury*  
(1471)

Death of  
Prince  
Edward

End of  
House of  
Lancaster

Tewkesbury ends the third acute phase of the Wars of the Roses. The first battle of St. Albans saw the allied houses of York and Neville triumph over the Beauforts; Towton marked their victory over King Henry; Barnet and Tewkesbury found the old allies at each other's throats, and ended in the downfall of the Neville power. The last phase traces the gradual break-up of the Yorkist power owing to the same cause that had exalted it — family ambition.

The remaining years of Edward IV's reign passed quietly. The King was personally popular; Henry VI had been put out of the way — he died on the day of Edward's triumphant return from Tewkesbury, possibly murdered by Gloucester; most of the Lancastrian leaders were dead; those who survived were exiles, poor, and in misery. Parliament, when it met, was on the whole content to let the King rule according to his pleasure. And pleasure was the main thing Edward sought. He did indeed embark on a war with France; if it was not glorious, it was at any rate of more practical use than many of our wars, for Louis XI

Death of  
Henry VI

<sup>1</sup> Henry was the son of Margaret Beaufort, who married Edmund Tudor. See table, p. 248.



bought him off with the payment of 72,000 crowns down, and promises of a further annuity. Edward might look forward to many years of life; he had two sons to succeed him; it might be assumed that the house of York was secure. Suddenly, in 1483, Edward died, at the early age of forty-two, leaving his kingdom to his young son, Edward V.

Death of  
Edward  
IV

## 2. RICHARD III — THE YORKISTS LOSE THE THRONE

England now was again thrown into confusion by the ambition of *Richard of Gloucester*, that uncle who personifies the wickedness of so many historical uncles. Richard had already given proof of that ruthless and unscrupulous ability which was the mark of his house. Battle, murder, and sudden death were his constant companions. He had fought well at Barnet and Tewkesbury; men believed that he had helped to stab Prince Edward; the murder of King Henry VI was laid at his door; he had quarrelled with his brother George of Clarence over the Neville inheritance, for each of the two had married a daughter of the Kingmaker, and he contrived to fill Edward's mind with those dark suspicions which caused Clarence to be imprisoned in the Tower, and there put to death. With the death of a king, a prince, and a brother already possibly laid to his account, he was an ominous "Protector" to two young nephews. Yet in the eyes of the nation, who knew little of State secrets and had grown used to violence, he was not distrusted. He was rather looked on as the strong man who might secure peace.

Richard  
of  
Gloucester

"Pro-  
tector"

We have seen first Richard of York, and then Richard of Warwick pushed into treason, in order to secure their own lives. In a sense it was so with Richard of Gloucester. Between him and the Queen's party, the Greys and the Woodvilles, there was an old feud. If they were supreme, his life was likely to be forfeit. Richard's first step was to

Richard's  
position:  
overthrow  
of the  
Woodvilles  
and the  
Queen's  
party



"rescue" the young King from the hands of his Woodville uncle, Earl Rivers. Together with the Duke of Buckingham he met the King's retinue at Stoney Stratford, bringing a number of retainers with him. He captured Rivers and Sir Richard Grey, sent them to prison at Middleham, and himself escorted the King to London. His next step was to rid himself of Lord Hastings, with whom he picked an intentional quarrel over the council table, and ended it by causing his head to be smitten off on a log outside the door. Little Edward V was installed in his royal palace of the Tower, soon to become his prison and his grave. It was no use to lop off one heir if the younger brother survived, and the younger brother was in sanctuary with his mother Elizabeth at Westminster. Gloucester inveigled him out as a companion for his brother, and sent him too to the Tower.

Edward  
V seized  
by  
Richard

All was now ready. London was packed with retainers bearing the Boar and the Knot.<sup>1</sup> The court chaplain and Buckingham urged Richard's claim to the throne, on the ground that Edward's marriage had been invalid: the silent arguments of the men-at-arms in the background were perhaps more convincing. The peers offered Richard the throne. Richard accepted it: to guard against opposition he had already ordered Rivers and Grey to be beheaded. To make himself more secure he caused James Tyrrel, governor of the Tower, to procure the murder of the little princes (Aug., 1483).<sup>2</sup>

Richard  
pro-  
claimed  
king  
  
Murder  
of the  
princes

Henceforth Richard had no friends save the cowards who feared to desert him, or the obscure men whom he promoted. One after another, plots were made. First his former ally the Duke of Buckingham, aided by the Courtenays and other westerners, plotted to put Henry Tudor,

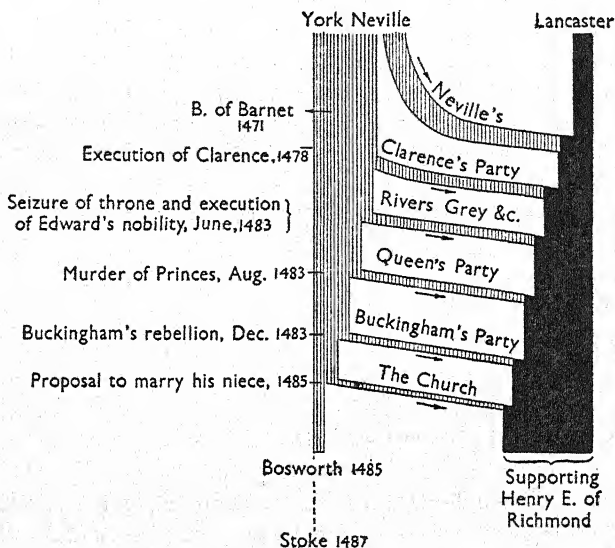
Plots  
against  
Richard:  
Buckingham

<sup>1</sup> Gloucester and Buckingham badges.

<sup>2</sup> Later historians have shown that at the time Richard was not accused of this. In the list of crimes which Henry Tudor declared that Richard had committed, there is no mention at all of the princes, or of their death. The accusation is of much later date, and has never been proved.

Fourth  
and last  
phase of  
the war

Earl of Richmond, son of Margaret Beaufort, on the throne. The stars in their courses fought against Buckingham. Storms prevented Richmond from landing, while a huge flood of rain so swelled the Severn into what was long remembered as "Buckingham's great water" that the Duke was cut off from his friends, captured and beheaded.



#### THE BREAK-UP OF THE YORKIST POWER

Richard's ferocious treatment of Buckingham had only made one more section of Yorkists into Lancastrians. His next wild scheme was to divorce his wife, Anne Neville, and marry his niece Elizabeth of York, daughter to Edward IV. In universal horror all who still held by the cause of York resolved that it were better to have a Lancastrian on the throne than Richard III.

Thus in 1485 Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, now allied with the Queen's faction of the Woodvilles, and under a promise to marry Elizabeth of York, landed in Wales to

win a final victory for Lancaster. Welshmen joined a man with a Welsh name. The Lancastrian houses of the Marches joined him; yet he seemed to have but a puny chance when at Bosworth, with 5000 men, he met Richard with more than double his number. But when Oxford led the Lancastrian attack, half Richard's men hung back, while the Stanleys turned traitors and fell on Richard's flank. The battle was won at a cost of a bare hundred men, and even the defeated side lost but few more. Yet, though the numbers lost were small, the battle was decisive because of the death of one man. Richard himself, pierced with many wounds, lay dead on the field. (*Note 37.*)

Henry  
Tudor.  
Joined by  
Woodvilles  
and the  
Welsh

Death of  
Richard  
III.

## NOTES ON PERIOD FOUR (1399-1485)

### RULERS OF ENGLAND

HENRY IV (1399-1413)  
HENRY V (1413-1422)  
HENRY VI (1422-1461)  
EDWARD IV (1461-1483)  
EDWARD V (1483)  
RICHARD III (1483-1485)  
HENRY VII (1485-1509)

### RULERS OF SCOTLAND

ROBERT III (1390-1406)  
JAMES I (1406-1437)  
JAMES II (1437-1460)  
JAMES III (1460-1488)

### IMPORTANT FOREIGN RULERS

|           |                                 |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| FRANCE:   | CHARLES VII (1422-1461)         |
|           | LOUIS XI (1461-1483)            |
| BURGUNDY: | CHARLES THE BOLD (1467-1477)    |
| SPAIN:    | FERDINAND OF ARAGON (1479-1516) |
|           | ISABELLA OF CASTILE (1474-1504) |
| FLORENCE: | COSIMO DE MEDICI (1388-1464)    |
|           | LORENZO DE MEDICI (1449-1492)   |

### NOTE 33. — THE LANCASTRIAN EXPERIMENT

1. Henry IV owed his throne to Parliament, as his claim was a doubtful one. Frequent rebellions kept him weak, so Parliament grew strong, and began to draw up "Appeals" (which later are called Bills), which the King accepted.
2. He needed support of the Church, hence began persecution of heresy and Lollards.
3. Scotland, Wales, and France all attacked him. Hence, his son Henry V was led on to renew the French war, and thus (a) attacked France and her ally, (b) distracted the minds of the English from home affairs, by an aggressive foreign policy.

## NOTE 34. — SECOND PHASE OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

1. Henry V revived the English claim to France as he wished for a bold foreign policy.
2. He was encouraged to invade France because she was then torn by civil war between the factions of the Burgundians and Armagnacs.
3. Henry's spectacular victories were largely due to French weaknesses.
  - (a) He had Burgundians fighting on his side.
  - (b) The King being insane and his son and heir in disgrace, Henry could bring about the Treaty of Troyes and get himself named heir to the throne of France.
4. **The Loss of French Possessions.** On death of Henry V his brother John, *Duke of Bedford*, carried on the conquest of France successfully for ten years. Then
  - (a) Faction broke out in England and Gloucester's quarrels with Beaufort weakened English policy.
  - (b) The French united, for Gloucester alienated Burgundy, and Burgundy returned to French allegiance.
  - (c) The English produced no capable leader, while *Joan of Arc* restored French spirit and first led the French to victory.
  - (d) The French, heartened by success, and free from feuds, united as a nation once more, and the English could not hold their French possessions against the new French method of war.
  - (e) The Kings of the two countries seemed to reverse position, for whereas Charles VI of France had been mad, and Henry V of England full of vigour, in this last phase the French King Charles VII showed great ability as he grew older, while Henry VI of England was feeble, and eventually suffered from his French grandfather's mental illness. The outbreak of strife between York and Lancaster completed the ruin of the English.

## NOTE 35. — THE CAUSES OF THE WARS OF THE ROSES

1. **The Royal Family.** The house of *York* represented (but through a woman) the elder branch of the descendants of Edward III. York was for many years loyal and was recognized as his cousin's heir. Gradually he was driven into opposition, and finally the birth of a son to Henry VI in 1453, just before Henry became insane, deprived York of all hope for the future.

The *Queen*, Margaret of Anjou, proved the ruin of Lancaster, and the curse of England. Violent and vindictive, she hated York, and by advancing her own friends she misgoverned the country and alienated all.

The *King*, always weak, was out of his mind at intervals and could do nothing.

2. **Feuds between the Nobles.** The great noble houses had become very powerful (especially Nevilles, and Howards, and Mowbrays), and feuds between them led to trouble. This was greatly increased by the practice of "livery", i.e. keeping bands of retainers, who were really private troops, and "maintenance", i.e. taking part in law suits and "maintaining" one person's cause against his opponent ("unlawful support given to a disputant by one not concerned in the case").
3. **Unpopular Foreign Policy of the Crown.** Led by the desire first for a French alliance and then by the Queen (herself French), to keep on good terms with France, the Crown steadily followed a policy of peace at any price, which became extremely unpopular. In the end, the Yorkists became the champions of an active warlike policy.
4. **Continued Misgovernment.** Distress at home led to revolts. *Jack Cade* (1450). The country became completely disordered with the nobles and landowners bullying the weak and quarrelling themselves. The Crown's ministers, Somerset and Suffolk, were incompetent, and so the Yorkists stood for reform, dismissal of the Queen's favourites, and finally were driven to demand the deposition of the King as incompetent to rule.

NOTE 36. — STAGES OF THE WARS OF THE ROSES

1. **York against Somerset.**  
York wished to drive Somerset, who was incapable and unpopular, from power. York *Regent*, during Henry's first attacks of madness, but on King's recovery, Somerset restored to power and swore vengeance on York. York took up arms in self-defence. War: 1st *St. Albans*, Somerset killed, York made Protector (1455).
2. **York against the Crown.**
  - (a) In 1459 the Queen attacked York, and defeated him at *Ludford*. He and Warwick fled abroad. Returned and won *Northampton*, captured Henry, and claimed the throne.
  - (b) Margaret rallied, and defeated York at *Wakefield*. York killed and others executed. Margaret showed great cruelty, and so did her little son Edward. (Asked what should be done with prisoners, he said, "cut off their heads", and it was done.)
  - (c) Margaret went on and defeated Warwick at 2nd *St. Albans*, and rescued King Henry. Delayed advance on London. York's son *Edward* joined Warwick, and they won a great victory at *Towton* (1461). *Edward IV* King, and won various victories up to 1464.
3. **York Quarrels with Warwick.**
  - (a) Edward as King alienated Warwick by his marriage policy and the rise of the Woodvilles. Warwick plotted with King's brother Clarence, and together they defeated Edward and executed the Woodvilles.

- (b) 1470. Edward turned the tables on Warwick and Clarence, who fled abroad and now joined with Queen Margaret.
- (c) Warwick, Clarence, and the Queen returned to England, Edward was defeated and fled. *Henry VI restored.*

#### 4. End of the Lancastrians.

1471. Edward attacked again (landed at Ravenspur in Yorks, and defeated (a) Warwick at first battle of *Barnet*; (b) Margaret at *Tewkesbury*. Warwick was killed in battle, Prince Edward was killed after Tewkesbury, Margaret fled, and Henry VI died in prison.

#### 5. Result of the Wars.

Enormous proportion of the barons and nobility killed. The country accepted Yorkists as Lancastrian dynasty now ended. The ordinary country folk took little part in the wars, as they were "a mere faction fight between great families".

#### NOTE 37. — CAREER OF WARWICK THE KINGMAKER

Warwick, called "the Last of the Barons" represented the power of the noble family at its height. The Nevilles a huge family with vast estates and many connections.

##### 1. Warwick as Ally of York.

- (a) Warwick *first supported Richard of York*, his cousin, against Somerset. Shared Richard's disgrace, and in 1459 fled with him to France.
- (b) Returned with York, and won battle of Northampton, but was defeated by Margaret at St. Albans. Then helped Edward of York to win Towton. Acted as warm *supporter of Edward as King*, 1461-64.
- (c) Warwick meant to be chief power behind the throne. Was a man of great ability and great courage, and Edward owed his throne to him. *Edward IV now alienated Warwick.*
  - (i) He married Elizabeth Woodville, and disappointed Warwick's plan for a French match, and advanced all her family.
  - (ii) He thwarted Warwick's plans for marriage of his (Warwick's) relatives.
  - (iii) He opposed Warwick's foreign policy of friendship with France, and instead allied himself to Burgundy.
- (d) Result, *Warwick plotted with Clarence*, overthrew Edward and captured him at Edgecote, and executed the Woodvilles. Restored Edward as King, thinking he had taught him a lesson (1469).



**2. Warwick as Ally of Lancaster.**

(a) Edward bided his time, and in 1470 collected troops, and forced Warwick and Clarence to fly for their lives. They went to France, where Louis XI, whom Warwick had always supported, brought about reconciliation with Queen Margaret. Warwick now *allied with Lancastrians*, and planned invasion of England. (Warwick's daughter married Prince Edward.) Warwick and Clarence returned to England, Edward IV's men deserted him, he fled to Burgundy (his ally), and *Warwick restored Henry VI*.

(b) Edward with his brother Richard decided to attack. Landed in Yorkshire, and marched south. Clarence deserted Warwick and joined his two brothers. Armies met at second battle of *Barnet*, and Warwick was defeated and killed.

Warwick showed great courage and ability, and Edward IV who owed him his throne, showed ingratitude towards him. Edward's later career showed him to have had no real capacity.

# TIME CHART FOR PERIOD FOUR (1399-1485)

| Sovereign.   | Events in Britain.  | Dates.   | Events Abroad.   | Dates.   |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Henry IV</b><br>(1399-1413)                                       | De Haeretic Comburendo; Rebellion of Owen Glendower; Percy-Mortimer Plot.<br>Battle of Homildon Hill.<br>Battle of Shrewsbury.  | 1401<br>1402<br>1403   | Quarrel of Burgundy and Armagnac.  | 1400   |
| <b>Henry V</b><br>(1413-1422)  | Henry invades France (Battle of Agincourt).<br>Sir John Oldcastle burnt.<br>Treaty of Troyes.<br>Regency of Bedford; Quarrels of Bedford and Gloucester.  | 1415<br>1416<br>1420<br>1422   | Murder of Duke of Orleans.<br>Battle of Agincourt.<br>Murder of Duke of Burgundy.  | 1407<br>1415<br>1419   |
| <b>Henry VI</b><br>(1422-1461)                                       | Death of Bedford.<br>Marriages of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou.<br>Cade's Rebellion.<br>End of Hundred Years' War; Birth of Prince of Wales.<br>Wars of Roses begin; 1st Battle of St. Albans; Battle of Wakefield.<br>Quarrel of York and Neville.<br>Battle of Barnet and Tewkesbury.<br>Murder of Clarence.<br>Buckingham's Rebellion. | 1435<br>1445<br>1450<br>1453<br>1455<br>1461<br>1471<br>1478<br>1483 | Death of Charles VI.<br>Joan burnt.<br>End of Anglo-Burgundian Alliance.<br>Columbus born.<br>Battle of Formigny.<br>Battle of Châtillon; Constantinople taken by the Turks. | 1432<br>1433<br>1434<br>1435<br>1436<br>1440<br>1450<br>1453 |
| <b>Edward IV</b><br>(1461-1483)<br><b>Edward V</b> (1483)            |   |  |  |  |
| <b>Richard III</b><br>(1483-1485)<br><b>Henry VII</b><br>(1485-1509) | Henry Tudor's Rebellion; Battle of Bosworth.  | 1485   |  |  |

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS ON PERIOD FOUR  
(1399-1485)

1. Sketch the part played in the Hundred Years' War by: (a) the Black Prince; (b) Joan of Arc. (LM 1932)
2. What difficulties faced Henry IV on his accession, and how did he deal with them? (CL 1932)
3. Show how Henry IV overcame his difficulties. (NUJB 1935)
4. Compare the efforts of Richard II and Henry IV to assert the royal authority against the nobles. (NUJB 1938)
5. Write a short account of *two* of the following: (a) foreign trade in the fourteenth century; (b) the Peasants' Revolt; (c) the Lollards; (d) Henry V's conquests in France. (NUJB 1938)
6. Why were the English driven from France in the reign of Henry VI? (NUJB 1937)
7. Describe the circumstances which led to the establishment of the Yorkists on the English throne. (LGS 1925)
8. Sketch the career of Warwick the Kingmaker and indicate its importance in English history. (LM 1931)
9. Illustrate from the Wars of the Roses the character and aims of the two contending parties. (OL 1927)

## PERIOD FIVE

### THE STRONG MONARCHY — THE TUDORS

1485-1603

#### CHAPTER 26

### THE NEW MONARCHY — HENRY VII

(1485-1509)

#### 1. INTRODUCTORY: THE NEW IDEAS

Henry VII began a new dynasty, and a new order. The world was to change greatly during the period when the Tudors ruled England. We pass into what is reckoned "modern" history.

Henry VII's reign is on the parting of the ways between medieval and modern England — its character is indeterminate. Most of the King's legislation was medieval; much of his policy, especially his marriage policy, was modern. Yet if we go back or forward a little we have no doubts about the character of the surroundings. Warwick was medieval, but Wolsey was not. Richard III, with an environment of axe and dagger, murder and sudden death, belongs to the museum of historical antiquities; Henry VIII, though scarcely less blood-stained, is yet essentially modern.

It is not difficult to find the new characteristics which mark off the age of the Tudors. There is the policy of what historians call "*dynastic marriages*" — marriage alliances by which monarchs attempt to build up world empires, adding kingdom to kingdom by marriages, as the barons in the Wars of the Roses had added estate to estate. One development of this policy threatened to link England

The  
turning-  
point  
between  
Medieval  
and  
Modern

Charac-  
teristics  
of the  
Tudor  
times: 1.  
Dynastic  
marriages

with Spain; another seemed likely to couple Scotland and France; a third, with more auspicious union, did join England and Scotland, and the union has not been shaken. There was the invention of *printing*; and there was the *new learning*, the substitution of criticism for entire obedience to authority. Then there was also the moving of the waters of religion, ending in the *Reformation*. The realm wavered between the old faith and the new, and in the end became Protestant; that change, too, was final. Lastly, there was the abandonment of the old policy of conquering territory in France, and, in its stead, the inrush into the *New World* which began the making of the British Empire, our latest and greatest inheritance. Any one of these would suffice to mark a new epoch; together they cleave a huge chasm between the old and the new.

2. New  
Learning.  
3. Refor-  
mation.  
4. Eng-  
land as a  
sea power

These characteristics, it is true, are not peculiar to Eng-  
land, nor indeed English in origin. Spain gave the earliest  
examples of successful dynastic marriages; she also, with  
Portugal, was first in the New World. The new learning  
had its birth in Italy. Germany led that revolt against  
Rome, which, with varying severity, attacked in turn every  
European country. Not merely does Tudor England differ  
widely from Plantagenet England; the same difference  
reveals itself between fifteenth-century Europe and six-  
teenth-century Europe, and to understand English history  
at this period we must note the change that was taking  
place in the states around.

Changes  
also  
European

Put briefly, it is the change from the old word "Christendom" to the modern word "Europe". In old times, though men of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and England spoke different tongues and were of different race, yet they had some common bonds. They were all of one church, all members of Christendom, all in a sense under the headship of Pope and Emperor — the "Two Swords" to which Christ's words after the Last Supper were held to apply. The name "Christendom" had, thus, a *monarchic* sense; it

implied a common faith, some unity of purpose, and a common obedience to Christ's Regents on earth. But the name "Europe" bears no such meaning. It is *anarchic*, for Europe owns obedience to no ruler, and has no community of purpose; there is no longer even one Church. Europe is a collection of independent states, each under its own government; these states are indeed joined by geography and entangled by politics, but each is seeking its own interest. This momentous change from "Christendom" to "Europe" was brought about by the appearance of a new political idea — the idea of the "*nation*".

The idea  
of  
"nation"

The latter half of the fifteenth century saw the decay of feudalism and the building up of strong monarchies. It saw Louis XI create France; it saw that union of Aragon and Castile in the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, which made Spain; it saw the Tudor line begin to heal the wounds left by the Wars of the Roses, and set up a monarchy which was really supreme. In each country, too, came a vigorous growth of national spirit, and a pride in national power. This spirit of national ambition revealed itself in Charles VIII of France's expedition into Italy; in the long struggle between France and Spain, in which England took now one side, now the other; in the new idea that the religion of each nation was a matter for its own concern and its own decision; and in the rivalry of the New World. Thus in a sense the new characteristics which we observed as marking Tudor England spring from a cause which is common to the whole of Europe, the *growth of national feeling*. For a time the new spirit was encumbered with the wreckage of the past — old beliefs, old policies, old traditions of the Medieval Papacy and the Medieval Empire. By degrees these were cleared away, and the new system, the society of "nations", set up in its place. True, that to begin with the important nations were only France, Spain, and England. Germany and Italy were still unnational, overweighted the one with the Empire, the other with the Papacy; and

New  
mon-  
archies

Growth of  
national  
feeling

Rise of  
the powers

centuries had to elapse before these, or the unwieldy power of Russia, entered upon the scene of international politics. (*Note 40.*)

## 2. REVOLTS AGAINST HENRY: REMEDIES FOR DISORDERS

**Marriage of Henry: Union of York and Lancaster** In England at first Henry VII had to meet the backwash of the Wars of the Roses. By his marriage with Elizabeth of York he joined the Red Rose to the White. If Henry's own claim was weak, that of his wife was strong; the children of that marriage would have an undisputed claim to the throne. We are tempted to think of the fairy prince, after many persecutions by robbers and demons, killing the ogre in single combat, wedding the princess, and living happily ever afterwards. The comparison is singularly false. There was nothing of the fairy prince about the astute, relentless, money-getting character of Henry VII.

**Revolt of Lambert Simnel** Nor did disorder die as suddenly as Richard III; it did not perish on Bosworth Field. It revived in Lovel's insurrection, which broke out in 1487. Edward, Earl of Warwick, was the son of George, Duke of Clarence, and thus, after the death of Richard III represented the last male heir of the Yorkist line. The young Edward was actually living in the Tower, as a state prisoner, but the Yorkists now put up *Lambert Simnel* to impersonate him. A mixed army of Yorkists, German mercenaries, and levies from Ireland was collected under his banner. A battle was fought at *Stoke*, where the Yorkists lost what was to be the last battle of the Wars of the Roses. Henry treated Simnel with leniency, thinking this the best policy, and he paraded the true Clarence through London to show the fraudulence of Simnel.

**Battle of Stoke (1487)—the last battle of Wars of the Roses** A far more formidable and troublesome person was **Perkin Warbeck** *Perkin Warbeck*, who for seven years gave Henry trouble. In 1492 he appeared in Ireland claiming to be Richard, Duke of York, the younger of the two Princes in the Tower.



He made the round of all Henry's enemies. Margaret of Burgundy took up his cause, and was consistently the chief person behind him. The King of France invited him to Paris, but by the Treaty of Étapes (1492) Henry secured his expulsion from France. He went to Flanders to Margaret, and from there a great plot was made which, being discovered by Henry, led to the execution of Clifford, Stanley, and Mountfort. Warbeck himself landed in Kent (1495), but this expedition proving a complete failure, he went to Ireland, and on to Scotland. There the King, anxious to harass Henry, took up his cause, and provided him with one of his own kinswomen as a bride. But two Scottish invasions of England failed, and, in 1497, James IV asked Warbeck to depart from Scotland. He could no longer take refuge in Flanders, for Philip of Burgundy now came to terms with Henry. The treaty, which was signed in 1496, was known as the "*Magnus Intercursus*" and encouraged the export of wool to the Netherlands, but it also contained a clause forbidding the entry of rebels against Henry into Philip's dominions. After crossing to Ireland to collect troops, Warbeck now made his fourth and final attempt to gain England. He landed at Penzance, took St. Michael's Mount, and besieged Exeter. The royal army advanced and he could not withstand it. He fled and surrendered (1497). Henry at first intended to treat him leniently and sent him to imprisonment in the Tower. After two years he tried to escape with Warwick, and their failure brought about the execution of both, Henry's patience being at an end. Warbeck deserved little sympathy; but it was hard measure for the young Clarence, who had been sixteen years in prison, first Richard III's captive and then Henry VII's. The change of dynasty had brought him no relief; he was dangerous to both sides. Henry no doubt felt as Essex felt about Strafford, that "stone dead hath no fellow". There were no more plots. (Note 39.)

Supported  
by Margaret of  
Burgundy.

by  
France,

by English  
plotters

Warbeck  
sup-  
ported by  
Scotland

The  
"Magnus  
Inter-  
cursus"  
Treaty

Final  
attempt  
on Eng-  
land  
(1497)

Henry was now victor, and he never allowed the nobles

**Action of Henry against baronage** to rise again. Their power had rested on the retainers; they and not the Crown wielded the fighting force of the nation. By his statute of "Livery" Henry destroyed the

**Statute of Livery** retainer. It was made illegal to dispense "Livery", the uniform or badge "delivered" to those who had contracted to fight for their employer. No longer would the Bear and Ragged Staff, the Knot, the Portcullis, or the White Lion disturb their neighbours<sup>1</sup>. The "private soldier" disappeared, and with him the curse of private war. Even so staunch a friend of King Henry's as the Earl of Oxford was sentenced to a heavy fine for welcoming the King with a body of men wearing the "Radiant Star" of de Vere. Henry could not endure to see his laws broken in his sight.

**Statute of Maintenance** Just as the Statute of Livery disarmed the rebel, so the Statute of Maintenance crippled the bully. For fifty years the law courts had been of little use, because no jury dared to do its duty against a great lord. When a case in which he was concerned was tried, his men-at-arms would crowd the court, ready to intimidate the jury by what is cynically called "moral" force, ready even to back this up by physical violence, should the other fail. This "Maintenance" of an adherent's suit in court by pressure was now made illegal. Relieved from fear, the ordinary law courts could be trusted once more to give justice.

**The Star Chamber** Yet one more precaution was taken by Henry VII in his creation of the Star Chamber. This court, though set up by Act of Parliament, owed its powers indirectly to the Crown. The King in theory was the fount of justice. Sitting in his council he could deal with offenders too powerful for the ordinary law. Henry VII had no wish to be judge himself; the days for a king on the bench were past; but his powers were handed over to the Star Chamber. In it sat the Chancellor, Treasurer, and Privy Seal, a bishop, and two chief justices, armed with powers to suppress all breaches of the law by offenders too noble or too high to be reached by the

<sup>1</sup> The badges respectively of Warwick, Buckingham, Beaufort, and Mowbray.

ordinary courts. It could punish by fines and imprisonment; it could deal with juries who gave unsatisfactory verdicts; it was, in short, a court to protect the weak against the strong. It is strange that in its later days it should be turned from its original use, and become the engine of tyranny.

Thus either in battle, or on the scaffold, or under the new authority of the Crown, the barons' power dwindled. No longer monopolizing the great offices of State, no longer exalted by intermarriage with royal sons and daughters — for Henry began a new policy of marriage — the great houses ceased to be a menace to the kingdom. Their power passed away, but the dread of it lived on later. As we shall see, under the Tudors the nation steadily supported the Crown, even when it seemed tyrannous, for fear that to weaken it might open the door to disorder once more. The great baronial houses perished in the turmoil they had created. They perished, however, alone. The Wars of the Roses hardly touched the common folk. The struggle was of the barons, not of the people. True, the party of York was more "popular" than the party of Lancaster. The Lancastrians had enjoyed a longer time to exhibit their capacity for misgovernment, and their supporters from the Welsh borders and the north were unusually fierce and lawless, even in a lawless age. Hence well-to-do merchants, peaceful traders, and honest craftsmen, were Yorkist rather than Lancastrian. But they confined their encouragement to sympathy; they took no active share. Hence, save for the local disorder, the realm thrived well enough; its industrial progress went on steadily; its wool trade with Burgundy was not interrupted; some of the older towns decayed, but new ones were springing up.

Collapse  
of the  
baronage

### 3. THE SEED TIME

Henry VII's reign was a period of remedy and a period of seed time. The remedies belonged to past ills. The sowing

was to bear great fruit in the future. For the meantime the results were hidden. We need only notice briefly what the seed was like.

1. First came the planting of the overpoweringly strong Tudor monarchy. The Wars of the Roses had left the barons exhausted, the Commons utterly discredited, and the realm filled with one great longing, namely, for peace. Peace could only be assured by the keeping of good order: order, it seemed, could only be kept by a strong king. Hence the determination of the nation to support the Crown. Let the king only be strong and of a good courage, and all would be well. Were he weak, or were the succession doubtful, disorder might break out again. Henry VII was avaricious, and Henry VIII seemed fitful and bloodthirsty; Mary was a Catholic, and a persecutor of Protestant subjects; yet all had, on the whole, the support of the people. The Tudors are sometimes spoken of as despots. If this be understood to mean stern absolute rulers, on whom Parliament imposed very little check, the name is fitting. If we infer that they held their people crushed down in an unwilling servitude, the inference is wrong. The Tudors were absolute because England believed in them, trusted them, and was willing that they should be absolute.

Various causes helped them to be absolute. Henry VII gathered a great hoard of money, then as now an unfailing source of power. His ministers — Cardinal Morton, Empson, and Dudley — used all sorts of methods to fill his exchequer, partly by demanding benevolences, more by imposing large fines on all who had trespassed on the rights of the Crown. Henry VIII spent all that his father had collected, but enriched himself in his turn by plundering the monasteries and the Church.

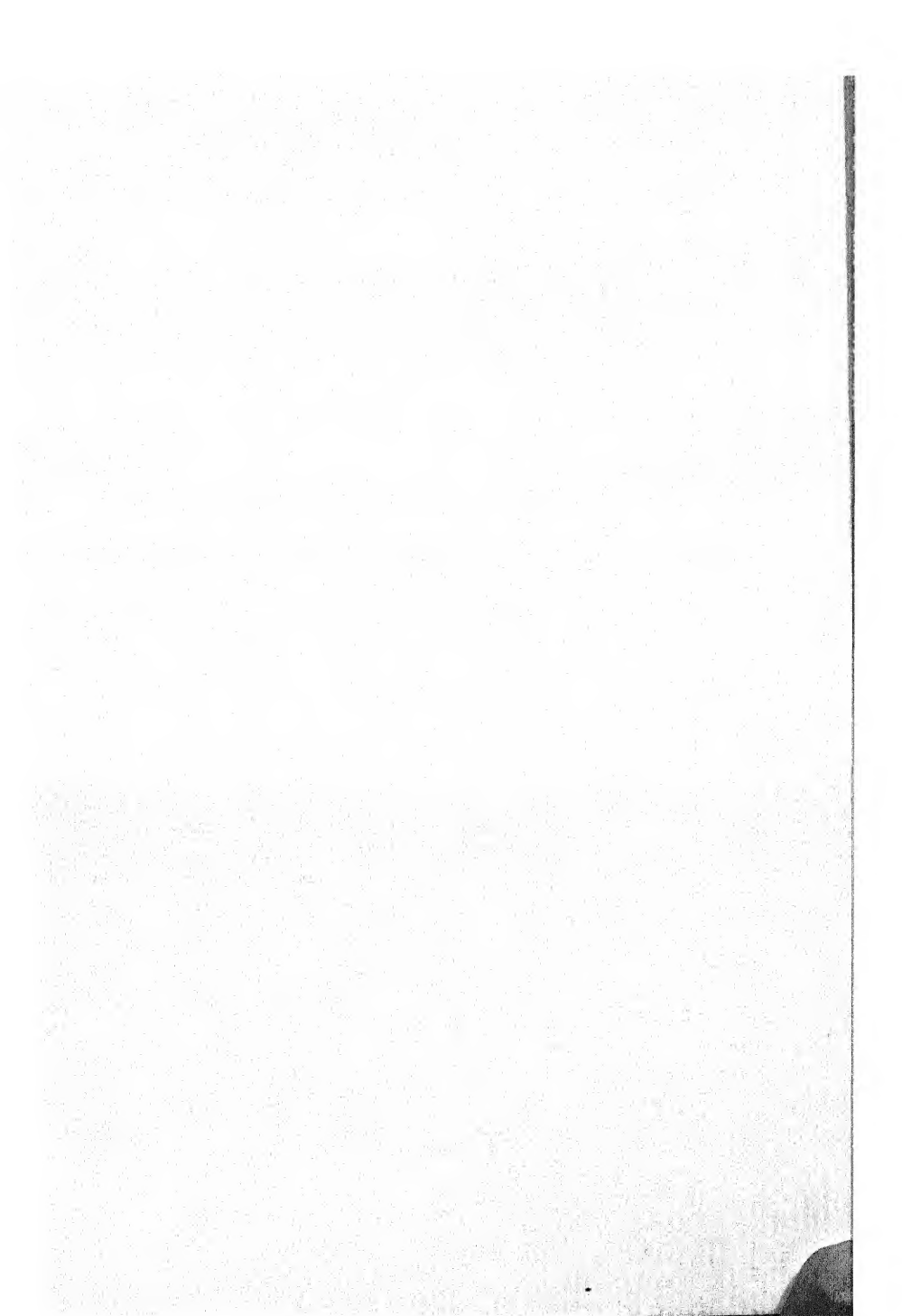
The coming into common use of gunpowder also strengthened the Crown. For more than a hundred years gunpowder had been known, but the early guns and cannons were so clumsy that they did not at first supersede

Ar

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Stat  
MaBased on  
popular  
supportThe  
ChaiFinancial  
strengthControl of  
armed  
force





the bow and the old siege-engines. When, however, artillery began to be efficient, the value of the old baronial castle dwindled away; and as the king alone possessed artillery, he had an advantage in war with which no rebel could compete. Further, since bullets were no respecters of either persons or plate-armour, the armoured knight no longer enjoyed comparative immunity in battle, and so was less ready to fly to arms in order to back a quarrel.

Gun-  
powder  
and  
artillery

2. In his later years, Henry's commercial policy took a step forward. He wished to foster the wool trade, and in 1506 chance gave him a great opportunity. Philip of Burgundy was wrecked on the English shores, and Henry, before letting him leave the country, forced him to sign a commercial treaty. This gave England such very favourable terms for the export of her wool that the Flemings called it the "*Malus Intercursus*".

Henry's  
com-  
mercial  
policy

Further, Henry enforced the old Navigation Acts, passed in the reigns of Richard II and Edward IV, which ordered English ships to be used in foreign trade. In particular all wine from Gascony was to be brought in English ships. The idea was to increase our mercantile marine even if it meant that the English shipper, having a monopoly, charged more for the goods.

Navigation  
Acts

Henry VII's reign saw the Genoese navigator Columbus discover the New World for Spain (1492), and Vasco da Gama round the Cape of Good Hope and open the route to the East for Portugal (1497). Nor was England content merely to look on. In 1497 some Bristol merchants fitted out an English ship, which under Venetian leaders — John and Sebastian Cabot — first reached the mainland of America. The value of these discoveries was slow to reveal itself. None the less, the change when it came was enormous. Commerce began to pass from the "thalassic" to the "oceanic" stage; that is to say, that while hitherto it had gone along the landlocked seas, especially the Mediterranean, it now began to put out on to the Atlantic. The

The New  
World:  
"oceanic"  
commerce

English  
explorers:  
the Cabots



change of trade routes meant much to England. While the Mediterranean had been the highway, England had been far off. The new highway lay at her door. Henceforth the States with an oceanic seaboard rose. England, France, Spain, and the Low Countries thrived; Venice, Genoa, and the Mediterranean ports dwindled. Henry VII's reign saw only the sowing of the seed; yet when the harvest came long years after, it was a great one for England.

3. So, too, with the new learning. Taking its second birth, its "renaissance", in Italy, it spread to other lands, bringing with it an enthusiasm for learning, especially for classical learning, and a desire to search out what was true. In its origin there was nothing about the new learning hostile to the old faith. Indeed, more than one pope encouraged and patronized the scholars. And when some of these, in their enthusiasm for Greek and Roman culture, were tempted into irreligious expressions, the Church treated them on the whole with the mild disregard which parents extend to wilful children. But the new spirit of research and criticism did not confine itself to classical texts; it attacked theological claims also. This the Papacy felt to be undesirable, if not dangerous; and thus the new learning and the theologians gradually parted company. In Henry VII's reign the parting of the ways had not been reached; Grocyn and Linacre, who taught Greek at Oxford, and Colet, who lectured on the Greek Testament, were mainly interested in spreading *learning*. Yet in the Flemish scholar Erasmus the signs of the coming struggle appear. Erasmus was always ready to mock the theology of the monks. Doubtless the monks' erudition was old-fashioned and often absurd. Yet ridicule is the first step in sapping the foundations of belief. Erasmus never became a Protestant, but he set the feet of many of his followers on the road. Again the seed lay in the ground germinating.

4. So it was also with the policy of dynastic marriages — marriages, that is to say, among royal houses, intended to

bring great inheritances and unite realms. It may seem at first sight out of character that this policy should accompany the growth of a national spirit, since it is absolutely at variance with ideas of national policy as we know them.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a monarch had not yet become merely an official. He directed the policy of the country, and his friendship would naturally express itself in marriage alliance. Marriages formed the easiest bond, and might prove most profitable in acquiring new dominions. Hence all statesmen were matchmakers. That a nation might object to such political *mariages de convenance* would not be a matter of serious concern to the kings and statesmen who arranged them. England was now for the first time about to join in a group of dynastic marriages, the effects of which deeply influenced European history during a great part of the sixteenth century; indeed European history of the time all hangs on them.

We have already mentioned Charles VIII's expedition to Italy. In 1494 that French monarch had allied himself with Milan, Genoa, and Florence, had marched an army through the length of Italy, and had seized the kingdom of Naples. The ease and effrontery with which his success was won alarmed everyone. Maximilian, who as Emperor had claims on Milan, and Ferdinand of Spain, who had claims on Naples, and the Pope, who was terrified at this sudden thrust from over the Alps, all sought means to guard themselves against this pushing, dangerous French monarch. The natural enemy of France was in their eyes England. Hence they strove to make alliance with Henry VII. They argued that he could, if he chose, keep France occupied at home; and if France were occupied at home, she would not be in mischief in Italy. Henry was willing to join them, and thus England took the first step in the dynastic marriages which were to prove a menace to the country for a whole century, and, after all, end fortunately.

Dynastic  
marriages

The  
French  
in Italy

The  
Emperor  
and Spain  
seek  
English  
alliance

It is impossible to understand the history of the time without a knowledge of this group of marriages in which England was now joining.

The story begins with the marriage in 1469 of Ferdinand of Aragon with Isabella of Castile, which formed the nucleus round which the nation of Spain gradually formed out of the mass of little kingdoms and provinces of the Peninsula. About the same time Maximilian of Austria (of the house of Habsburg) had married Mary of Burgundy, thus winning for the house of Habsburg all Charles the Bold's Burgundian dominions, including the Low Countries. The daughter and heiress of the Spanish sovereigns, Juana, married Philip the Handsome, Maximilian's only son. This brought the Habsburgs into Spain. The new-born son of Philip and Juana, Charles (born 1500) would be heir to vast dominions. Spain, the duchy of Austria, Burgundy and the Low Countries, lands in Italy, and the Spanish possessions oversea would all be his. The prize that was offered to Henry VII was the hand of Katherine of Aragon, younger sister of Juana, and Henry accepted it for his eldest son, Arthur. Arthur, however, died in 1502 within a year of his marriage, and the bride was affianced to the King's second son Henry, afterwards Henry VIII.

Spain  
and the  
house of  
Habsburg

Offer of  
Spanish  
marriage  
with  
England;  
Katherine  
of Aragon  
marries  
Prince  
Arthur  
and then  
Prince  
Henry

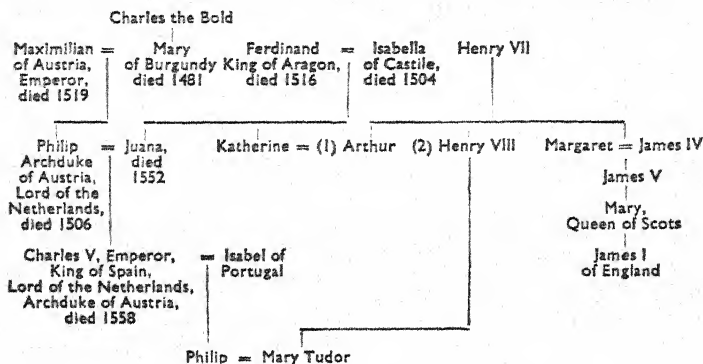
Here, then, was the first great marriage-stroke, entwining the fortunes of England with those of Spain and Austria, securing its aid against the ambition of France. In the future lay other unexpected great events destined to spring from it — the English Reformation and the Marian persecution. Henry had before this joined in hostility to France. He had made a show of fighting, and sent an expeditionary force in 1492, taking ships and besieging Boulogne. But the proceedings were a mere form, and peace was made by the *Treaty of Etaples* (1492). The French King paid him a large indemnity in money, and promised to withdraw his support of the Pretender, Perkin Warbeck. Henry had gained both cash and increased security.

Hostility  
to  
France

Treaty of  
Etaples

Not content with this, another blow was aimed at France by the politicians of the house of Habsburg. France had been the enemy of England, and therefore the ally of Scotland. To detach the Scots from the French and so leave France isolated would be a master-stroke. To effect this the hand of Margaret, Henry VII's elder daughter, was offered to James IV of Scotland, and he accepted it (1502).

Marriage  
alliance  
with  
Scotland



Having thus raised England to a position of great influence in Europe Henry VII died, and left the working out of his schemes to his son. (Note 38.)

## CHAPTER 27

### HENRY VIII (1509-1547)

#### 1. WOLSEY

Henry VIII's long reign divides naturally enough into two periods. In the first the interest lies mainly abroad; eyes are fixed on international rivalries between France and Spain, the Empire and the Popes, and on diplomatic struggles amongst them. The second is taken up with the Reformation. The connecting point between the two is the

Henry  
VIII's  
reign

divisions

question of the King's divorce. The two periods present a contrast. The earlier one, though full of an appearance of greatness, is in reality curiously barren of material results. Out of all the scheming, intrigues, and alliances emerges practically nothing that is tangible. The later period is perhaps the most momentous time in the whole of English history. Yet though in most respects the first period was fruitless, it was notable for one thing. It contained Wolsey: and Wolsey was the first statesman to raise England to a great place in European politics. (*Note 41.*)

The new feature of European politics of the time has been already mentioned — it was the rise of national feeling showing itself in the creation of nation-states. This new idea, however, was still striving with the Medieval notion of Christendom, the headship of Papacy and Empire. Hence the chief theatre of the politics lay in Italy. But there England had no direct interests or claims. Hitherto in the eyes of Papacy and Empire, in the ideas of Christendom, her place had been unimportant. It is a significant fact that at the Council of Constance (1414), where the voting went by *nations*, England was not recognized as a separate nation at all. She was grouped with the Germans.

By intervening in these European politics which had their centre in Italy, Wolsey hoped to make England of importance, and by the skill which he showed in setting off one nation against the other, England for a time did carry weight in Europe. Finally it was partly through Italian politics that Henry's divorce was refused, thus bringing about the breach with Rome and the Reformation.

Since for the first twenty years of Henry VIII's reign the attitude of England was the chief question for all diplomatists, and since, further, England's diplomacy lay in the hands of one of the greatest diplomatists she has ever produced, some knowledge of the course of events is essential, even though at the end none of the results aimed at appear to be attained.

Henry's early policy was to attack France, and events abroad gave him his opportunity. Italy after Charles VIII's expedition had been in a constant state of confusion. France, Spain, and the Papacy had first united to attack Venice in the *League of Cambrai*, but now they had quarrelled.

Attack on  
France

The Pope, Julius II, wished to drive the French out of Italy. He formed a *Holy League* to do this.

Ferdinand of Spain persuaded his son-in-law, Henry VIII, to join the Holy League, and invited him to attack France in the rear. Henry, anxious for glory, agreed. The outcome of this was a fruitless expedition to Guienne in 1511, and the more successful campaign of 1513, in which Terouenne and Tournai were taken and the Battle of the Spurs won. Another result was the battle of Flodden, where the Scots, faithful as usual to their French alliance, invaded England and were completely routed. Then, as Henry saw that he was being left to do all the work, while Ferdinand and Maximilian reaped the rewards, he withdrew from the alliance.

Henry  
joins the  
Holy  
League

Expedi-  
tions to  
France  
(1511-13)

It is this turn of policy which marks the rise of Wolsey. So far, all had been in the old fashion — an attempt to recover the lost lands in Guienne, a war against the old rival, France, accompanied as usual by an irruption of the old enemy, Scotland, over the borders. In the diplomacy and in the preparations for war Wolsey had made a sudden great reputation. Fellow of Magdalen, Oxford, rector of Lymington, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, royal chaplain to Henry VII, he found in the new King a master who gave him work and rewarded the vigour with which he performed it. In gratitude for Wolsey's efforts to fit out the expedition of 1513 Henry made him Bishop of Tournai, and in the next year Bishop of Lincoln. More important still, he gave him his confidence. Thus a new steersman stood at the wheel and gave a totally unexpected turn to it. He abandoned the policy of opposing France, and determined to turn that country into an ally.

Thomas  
Wolsey  
and his  
new  
policy

Wolsey's  
success in  
French  
war

Change  
of policy

Henry was already angry with Maximilian and Ferdinand, and readily agreed to Wolsey's schemes. The chance soon came. Louis XII's queen died: he was looking out for a new bride. With the utmost secrecy Wolsey negotiated a match between him and Henry VIII's youngest sister, Mary. That the King was fifty-two and the bride seventeen was, of course, not worth considering by a statesman. Questions of personal feeling did not weigh beside strokes of diplomacy. And the stroke was a master-stroke. Not only did it show that England had a diplomatist as subtle, silent, and speedy as any Spaniard or Italian; but by allying England with France it marked the beginning of a complete change in policy, a policy which by degrees became established as traditional, namely to treat *Spain* as England's rival and encounter her power at sea and in the New World.

The eventual results were clear and of great consequence; on the other hand, the immediate results were confused and unaccompanied by any very tangible advantage. To put it in another way, Wolsey's statesmanship only became clear as the century rolled on. For the present it was obscured by his diplomacy. And as diplomacy has to deal immediately with events as they arise, it often conveys the impression of being vacillating and opportunist. Since the first result of Wolsey's abandonment of the Holy League for a French alliance was to demonstrate how important England might be in European politics, the object of all diplomatists was to secure England's friendship. Thrown into one side of the balance or the other, England's weight would be decisive. Wolsey saw that the best and indeed the only way of preserving this position of authority was to keep, or to seem to keep, an open mind. To decide firmly for one side or the other was to lose the power of decision. Yet, while Wolsey's policy at times swayed between France and Spain, on the whole, at each important crisis, he turned towards France as the better ally.

The  
French  
alliance  
  
Marriage  
of King's  
sister

Opposition  
to Spain

Desire for  
England's  
friendship



If we summarize the course of events we shall see this more clearly. His first stroke, the marriage of Mary with Louis XII, was robbed of its value by the death of Louis in 1515. His successor, Francis I, an ambitious young man, immediately plunged into war to regain the duchy of Milan, and defeated the Swiss allies of the duke at Marignano. Europe again grew alarmed lest France should grow too strong. In the next year Ferdinand of Aragon died, and his grandson Charles became his heir, uniting under his rule an alarming mass of territory — Burgundy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sicily. Again Wolsey met this danger with a French alliance, and confirmed it with the pledge of Henry's infant daughter Mary to the Dauphin. With great skill he negotiated a Universal Peace, in which the Pope, the Emperor, France, Spain, and Scotland joined. Thus he made England appear as supreme arbiter in European politics.

Francis I  
The passing of the  
old men —  
Louis XII  
(1515).  
Ferdinand  
(1516)

Charles  
of Spain

Peace  
treaty of  
1516

In 1519 came a fresh change with the death of the Emperor Maximilian. Francis and Charles V were both candidates to succeed him as Emperor. Henry's vanity compelled Wolsey to put his claim forward too, though his chances were never seriously treated. Eventually Charles was elected, England maintaining a position of neutrality towards both sides in order that each might feel that any unfriendliness might throw Henry into his rival's camp. Each power tried to win Wolsey and the alliance of his royal master, by dangling before him the bait of the Papacy, and promising support at the next vacancy in the Holy See. This phase is marked by the glories of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, where Henry first met Francis, but having made no treaty with him went on to Calais to interview the Emperor Charles.

Death of  
Maxi-  
milian  
(1519).  
Contest  
for the  
Empire

The  
Field of  
Cloth of  
Gold

Henry  
allies  
with  
Charles

All was now in the hands of the young men. Charles of Spain, Francis of France, and Henry of England were much less cautious and wary than Louis XII, Ferdinand, and Maximilian. The problem, too, had been narrowed and intensified, for Maximilian's and Ferdinand's powers had

The  
young  
men

coalesced. There was no longer Spain and the Empire to be considered. They were under one ruler, and they lay on either side of France. The rivals, however, could not keep at peace; and Henry, urged by his Spanish wife, by the national connection between England and Flanders in commerce, and by the old-fashioned liking which his nobles had for a war with France, took the side of Spain. Wolsey disapproved, but he could not sway his master. Two campaigns, however, showed that it was easier to plan the reconquest of the lost English provinces than to carry it into effect. It was almost impossible to get money to carry on the war. Parliament would give no supplies. Wolsey's device of a benevolence, under a new and more alluring title of "the Amicable Loan", was met with clamour and even tumult. In 1525 Francis was defeated and captured at Pavia,<sup>1</sup> and Wolsey had drawn off from the Spanish side. In 1527 the Imperial troops, under the Duke of Bourbon, sacked Rome, and made Pope Clement VII prisoner. Wolsey used the indignation which this outrage on the Pope caused to prepare a fresh French alliance.

Close on the heels of this came the trouble of the King's divorce, leading to Wolsey's fall, and the Reformation. The languid interest which the country had shown in Wolsey's somewhat bewildering diplomacy suddenly sprang into a flame when the old grievance of the papal power in England came to the front. Here must be traced the beginnings of the Reformation.

## 2. THE REFORMATION

### (i) THE NEW LEARNING AND THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY

It is almost universally true of the great figures in the world's history that they are partly shaped by the trend of current opinion, and are so far the product of their time:

<sup>1</sup> "Tout est perdu fors l'honneur (et ma vie)," he wrote to his mother,

yet more still they react on public opinion, and so shape their time to their own opinions. So with Luther. To grasp the significance of his work it is needful to see where he merely took up a movement already started, and also how far he gave a new turn to its direction.

A scholarly knowledge of ancient Greek was, during the greater part of the Middle Ages, a very rare accomplishment even in Constantinople, and in other parts of Europe it was almost non-existent. But in Italy at the close of the fourteenth century, and especially during the fifteenth century, came a great revival of the study of ancient Greek. An interest in Greek once stimulated in Italy, there came a demand for Greek writings to read. These were first the classical writers, and above all Plato. Curiosity, once stirred, spread. Classic Greek revived classic Latin; and the Italian Renaissance took the shape of a classic revival in letters and art. To it the world owes an amazing debt in scholarship, sculpture, literature, painting. But it does not owe the Reformation. The spirit of the New Learning showed no signs of being in any way anti-papal. It would study, comment, and criticize; but it would do nothing.

Yet in Italy, as elsewhere through Europe, there was much that needed doing. While the New Learning was rekindling Italian scholarship, the Church, as illustrated by its leaders the popes, seemed to be decaying in morals and influence. Even so honest and well-meaning a pope as Pius II could not raise a spark of real enthusiasm in his attempt to stir Europe once more to drive back the Turks. The days of crusading zeal were past. Gradually, from 1470 onwards, the popes slipped into what was going on around them. They became Italian princes, seeking to build up for the Church a strong principality. Only by having such a strong principality, so it was thought, could the papacy maintain its independence against the Italian princes.

Still, the manifold abuses of the time, the emptiness of the Papacy, the alliance that was growing closer between

the Church and the world, the aloofness that prevailed between religion and life, the gap that was widening between the new learning and the old theology, caused no real troublings of heart in Italy. Italy had acquiesced for so long in the position and claims of the medieval Church, as embodied in the papal system, that it believed this to be as enduring as the sun in the firmament. The scholars may have despised the churchmen a little, as being ignorant and unenlightened, but they accepted the Papacy and its ways. The Papacy, in its turn, tolerated the scholars with easy confidence. Indeed, some popes, such as Nicholas V and Leo X, were great patrons of literature and art; and Julius II gave architects and artists such as Bramante, Raphael, and Michelangelo wonderful opportunities at Rome.

The Pope  
as patron  
of art

Germany and England had got what Italy had not — a sense that wrong is not the less wrong for being long upheld, and that right, even if new, may still be right. In Germany and in England the New Learning was practical. Men felt that learning was barren unless it bore directly upon life. To know better was useless, if it did not lead men to live better and to do better. Thus the scholarship which in Italy worked among the classics turned across the Alps to the field of the New Testament.

The New  
Learning  
in Ger-  
many and  
England

Desire for  
reform

Two types, then, were characteristic of the New Learning in the north: the theologian, who, while not regardless of tradition and of what men had been taught in the past, yet applied his learning to it to find out what he believed to be the *truth*; secondly, the reformer, who, fearless of power and dignitaries, followed out his conclusions to do what he felt to be *right*. The best examples of these two types are Erasmus and Luther.

Desiderius Erasmus was a Fleming. Left an orphan and pushed into a monastery, he had as a boy acquired an intense dislike for monks and their life, and on coming of age had quitted his monastery. He had studied at Paris and then at Oxford, and later his wanderings included

Erasmus

Germany and Italy. Too wide-minded to fall in with either the impractical spirit of the Italian Renaissance, or the theological brawling which was disturbing Germany, his critical mind set others on the path from which he himself ultimately shrunk back. His influence was displayed in two ways. First, in his book, the *Praise of Folly*, he taught the world, and especially the world of scholars, to laugh at the old-fashioned scholastic learning of the monks.<sup>1</sup> Many had in different ages assailed the monks with abuse, and done them on the whole little harm. To the poisoned shafts of Erasmus's wit no effective reply was possible. Yet ridicule of the monks and their opinions naturally resulted in a contempt for their order and their faith; this meant a sapping of one of the buttresses of the Church. But much more important than Erasmus's work as a wit was his work as a critic. He published, in 1516, a complete edition of the Greek Testament, and placed beside the Greek a new Latin translation, in which he corrected what seemed to him to be mistakes, while in notes he expressed freely his ideas upon current beliefs. One example will illustrate the whole. On the text, "Upon this rock I will build my church", he observes that this does not refer only to the Pope, but to all Christians. Methods of this kind would speedily call upon all the claims of the papacy to justify themselves from the Bible, and would press for their rejection should they fail to do so.

His edition  
of the  
New  
Testa-  
ment

What Erasmus taught was put into practice by Martin Luther. A peasant by birth, he had entered an Augustinian house at Erfurt, but the life of the cloister gave him no comfort, for he was oppressed with an intense consciousness of inward sin. He left the monastery in 1508, and became a teacher of theology in the new Saxon university of Wittenberg. A visit to Rome which he paid in 1510 revealed to him the depth of carelessness and indifference which pervaded the papal court. He set himself more anxiously than

Martin  
Luther

<sup>1</sup> The book was not directed against the monks particularly, but against fools. Erasmus merely found the species plentiful in monasteries.

Indul-  
gences

ever to study the Bible, in the belief that here was to be found the only remedy against what he called "the reign of slothfulness" which "made the way to heaven so easy that a single sigh suffices". So, when the Dominican friar Tetzel came into Saxony with a commission to grant indulgences (which remitted penances imposed after sin) in return for a gift towards the fund for building St. Peter's in Rome, Luther took fire. There was, he felt, grave danger that simple or careless men would interpret the giving of money in the wrong way; that they would not realize that sin must be atoned for by inward penitence, and that till this was done and absolution granted, charitable and pious actions and gifts, however virtuous, were useless. Accordingly he posted on the church door at Wittenberg a series of theses explaining his views, inviting discussion, and asking for an expression of "the mind of the pope".

Luther's  
quarrel  
with  
Rome

Luther wished to have a discussion on a doubtful point of theology, but the papacy had no wish for such a discussion. Doubtless the doctrine of indulgences led to abuses; later, at the Council of Trent, the Church had to condemn "disreputable gains" made by those who desired to obtain them; yet equally certainly the system of indulgences had proved most profitable to the papacy. To destroy it would throw papal finance into confusion; to meddle with it was dangerous. Accordingly Luther must be bidden to hold his tongue.

Luther  
attacks  
the Pope

But Luther persisted. When commanded again to be silent, he inquired into the pope's motives for ordering silence, and began to question whether the pope might not himself be wrong. Other popes had erred. Why not Leo X (who was Pope at that time)?

The dispute went busily on, and Luther's ideas were listened to with attention. He began to speak also in a way that could be understood. Discarding Latin, the learned language in which till now all the theological discussions had been enshrouded, he appealed to the Germans in their own



German tongue. And his ideas soon became more extreme. He began to demand changes in doctrine. He wished to sweep away four of the seven sacraments, and he began to talk of the powers of a General Council over the papacy.

His  
demand  
for  
reforms

The one way now to extinguish Luther was to deprive him of support by removing grounds of complaint. This could be done only by making a serious attempt to right abuses and cool down anger by reasonable reform and concession. This, however, was not the policy of the Papacy. Luther was condemned at the Diet of Worms in 1521, and the princes of the Empire were adjured to root out his heresy. But five years later Pope and Emperor quarrelled. The Pope had absolved Francis I from keeping the promises Charles had exacted from him after the defeat of Pavia, and accordingly Charles refused to support the Papal cause against the heretics. The imperial policy was reversed; each prince was given liberty to act about Luther "as he thought he could answer to God and the Emperor" — that is to say, as seemed best to his own taste. Immediately after, the Imperial troops — a mixture of Spanish Catholics and German Lutherans, led by the French renegade Bourbon — sacked Rome with every species of horror and blasphemy, and held the Pope imprisoned in his Castle of St. Angelo.

Condem-  
nation of  
Luther

Quarrel of  
Pope and  
Emperor

Yet, though Lutheranism had spread in Germany, no powerful state had put Luther's views into practice by rejecting the authority of the Pope. This momentous step was first taken by England. Here is the reason why the English Reformation was an event of paramount importance not only in our land, but all over Europe. (*Note 44.*)

## (ii) THE BREACH WITH ROME

English scholars had been as zealous as the Germans in seeking the New Learning, and had sought it in the same practical spirit. *Grocyn* studied at Florence, and came back to lecture at Oxford in 1491. *John Colet*, Dean of St. Paul's,

The  
English  
Reformers



**Colet** had, like Erasmus, valued his Greek most because by it he could unlock the treasures of the Gospels: he had unhesitatingly set aside the learning of the schoolmen, as being barren or misleading, and based his teaching on the literal words of the New Testament. In his foundation of St. Paul's Grammar School he gave clear proof of his aims, by causing to be placed over the master's chair in his new school the image of the child Christ, with the words, "Hear ye Him".

**Erasmus** himself taught at Cambridge, and inspired Latimer and Fisher with his ideas. In brilliance of wit and in seriousness of mind he found a rival in his own

**More** friend, *Thomas More*. More's book, *Utopia*, describing the ideal land of "Nowhere", was far in advance of its time in its wide and tolerant principles. He pictures a commonwealth where the aim of law was the good of its members; where all were free to worship as they pleased "because it is not in a man's power to believe as he list"; where none were poor, because goods were held in common, yet all had to work because work was necessary to human wellbeing; where the sovereign was removable "on suspicion of a design to enslave his people"; where all children were taught; and where the punishment for crime was so to be ordered to make the criminal "ever after live a true and honest man". This foreshadows all that the modern state has striven after and a good deal that it has not yet attained. No book shows so well as *Utopia* how the human soul may leap forward out of the trammels of its time. Yet though More, Colet, and the "Greeks" at either University struggled against the "Trojans", who still clung to the old teaching and the old ideas, they could make little practical progress in the real task of reform by themselves. Till

**Wolsey** the King or Wolsey would stir, nothing could be done, and both were for the present immersed in foreign diplomacy. Wolsey, it is true, saw the need for reform, but the moment was not propitious, and he was too busy ever to find a time. Being Cardinal-Legate he had the power to deal with the

Church, but he put off doing it. His few efforts were cautious and prudent. He realized that some of the monasteries needed reform, and he suppressed a few of the smaller ones, using their funds to found "Cardinal College"<sup>1</sup> at Oxford.

His reforms

Yet should cause of affront be given, the King would find his people willing supporters against Rome. One great source of Henry's power was that he was so completely an Englishman of his time. He understood his subjects and they him. So far he had no quarrel with the Papacy; he heartily condemned Luther, and had caused to be published in his own name a confutation of that heretic which Pope Clement had rewarded with the gift of the Golden Rose. Clement's predecessor, Leo X, had conferred on him the title of "Fidei Defensor" — a title which still figures on our coinage. But Henry had no deep-grounded respect for the Papacy, and in 1526 the cause of quarrel was not far off. Henry was tiring of his wife Katherine.

Henry VIII opposes Luther

It must be admitted that Henry and Katherine had little to hold them together. Being a Spaniard, she had disliked the French alliance to which Henry, under Wolsey's guidance, had turned so frequently, and she had pestered the King with more zeal than wisdom. Henry on his side was disappointed that she had borne him no son to follow him, and secure the succession;<sup>2</sup> each grew cool towards the other, and Henry found her companionship more and more distasteful. But his ideas were suddenly turned in the direction of a new marriage by the fact that he fell violently in love with a lady of the court named Anne Boleyn. To win Anne, it was needful to get rid of Katherine; once more Henry turned to Wolsey for help. A technical ground was not far to seek. Katherine had been his brother Arthur's widow; hence the marriage had been illegal but for a dispensation

Henry and his wife

Anne Boleyn

<sup>1</sup> Now Christ Church.

<sup>2</sup> Katherine had given birth to four sons, but they all died at birth, and Henry believed this was the "judgment" of God on him for marrying his brother's widow.

from the Pope; the King's conscience now became convinced that the dispensation was wrong; could not his marriage be declared null and void? Popes had done greater things for monarchs than this.

Wolsey did not oppose the idea: perhaps he even suggested it to Henry; he would be glad to be rid of Katherine and her Spanish views, and he hoped to negotiate a marriage between Henry and a French princess. But though he hoped the Pope might be persuaded, yet there were many difficulties. Nothing could be said against Katherine, who was of most virtuous character. England would probably sympathize with her, especially when the King's real object, namely, to marry Anne, had leaked out. Both France and Spain would oppose it — France, because Henry and Katherine's daughter, Mary, was betrothed to the Dauphin, and such action would leave her illegitimate; Spain, because Charles V was Katherine's nephew. And in 1527, when the affair was being cautiously broached, came the sack of Rome, which left Pope Clement at Charles V's mercy. No more inauspicious moment could be chosen for trying to persuade the Pope to offer the Spanish king a deadly affront. No wonder that Wolsey hesitated.

Things went as he expected. Neither Spain nor France gave him any help. Clement put things off, then appointed Wolsey and Cardinal Campeggio to hear the cause in England, but did not give them the power of final decision. Campeggio reached England in October, but the trial did not begin till the following June. Its verdict was expected in July, but at the end of that month Campeggio declared the sitting adjourned for two months more. This renewed delay made Henry furious.

Here was revealed what had been hitherto but dimly seen. The real master of England was after all not Wolsey but Henry; and Henry showed the quality which Wolsey lacked — determination, and disregard of tradition and consequence which might stand in his way. Hence, while men were

waiting for the cautious Wolsey to find his way round this thicket of political thorns, Henry, like a bull, burst through it.

He threw over Wolsey, and directed his attorney to sue for a writ of *præmunire* against his minister on the ground that, acting as Papal Legate, he had broken the statute which forbade appeals to foreign courts. The charge was iniquitous, since Wolsey had obtained his legatine authority at the King's own pressing desire, in order to use it for the King. But that, he knew, would not save him. He made instant and humble submission, acknowledging that all his goods were most justly forfeit to his "most merciful" master. Henry seized his goods, deprived him of the Great Seal, and dismissed him to his see of York. He probably was not quite sure that he might not want him again. Wolsey's enemies, however, were too strong; the Cardinal was arrested at York for high treason, and dispatched southwards to the Tower. Death, however, was more merciful than the King: broken-hearted, feeble, and despairing, Wolsey struggled to Leicester, and there died. Henry's last act was to send instructions to an envoy to question his old servant on his deathbed as to what he had done with £1500 which he had scraped together after his fall, the last remnant of that vast wealth which had been spent for the King, or seized by him. (Note 41.)

Wolsey's  
disgrace

Præmu-  
nire

Wolsey's  
death  
(1530)

Two steps which the King took close on Wolsey's fall are most significant of the future. He issued writs for the summoning of a Parliament, and he appointed *Sir Thomas More* to succeed Wolsey as Chancellor. Parliament save for one brief session had not met for fourteen years; it was much longer since a king had entrusted his conscience to a layman's keeping.<sup>1</sup> But both signs point the same way: the sway of the Church in politics was tottering, the "minister" and the layman were rising to take its place.

More  
made  
Chan-  
cellor

It must be noted that in all his attacks on the Church, Henry was really aiming at destroying Papal power in

Anti-  
papal  
policy

<sup>1</sup> The Chancellor is "the Keeper of the King's Conscience".

England. He never attacked Roman Catholic doctrine — indeed, as we shall see later, he insisted on his subjects observing it.

In 1529 the Reformation Parliament, as it is called, met. It proceeded at once to carry out the King's policy towards the Church. The first attack fell on a vulnerable point — the pocket. Hitherto the clergy and the Church had been in the habit of getting large fees from the probate of wills, and from "corse presents" (mortuary fees, paid when a dead body was taken through a parish); some of the clergy had made money by farming and trading; all these sources of revenue were docked. Many of the clergy had held more than one benefice; these "pluralities" were now forbidden, as was the practice of non-residence, unless special leave was granted by the King. Hitherto this leave had been granted by the Pope. Here was the first grasp of the royal hand that was to tighten round the clergy.

In the second session all the clergy were entangled in the mesh that had snared Wolsey, the penalties of *Præmunire*. Wolsey was guilty, and so were they. The Convocation of Canterbury hastily bought their pardon with a gift of £100,000, York followed with £18,000. Under the law the laity were involved too, but the King graciously pardoned the rest of his subjects wholesale — for nothing — "of his benignity, special grace, pity, and liberality" as the Act of Parliament put it.

Before the next session came round the King's agents had been busy at Rome, but had made no progress over the annulling of the King's marriage. Consequently Parliament gave another turn to the screw by the *Act of Annates* (1532): "albeit the king and all his subjects be as obedient, devout, catholic, and humble children of Holy Church as any people within any realm Christian", yet the payment of annates (the firstfruits of a benefice) to the Pope was henceforth to cease;<sup>1</sup> any bishop who paid them should forfeit lands and

<sup>1</sup> They did not lapse altogether: an act of 1534 bestowed them on the Crown.

goods to the King: and if in consequence of the act the Pope were to refuse the bull confirming the election of a new bishop, the bishop should be appointed by two of his brethren without waiting for the Pope's consent. But as King and Parliament did not wish to use violence "before gentle courtesy first attempted", the King was to have the power of declaring whether the Act should be put in force.

But if nothing could be got from Rome, Henry was ready to do without Rome.

A considerable body of opinion held that Henry's marriage to Katherine had not been legal, and the King now tried to reassure himself by getting the support of those who held this view. The Universities were places where qualified divines studied, and Henry now wished to have the judgment of the Universities on his marriage. Actually, the foreign Universities gave varying answers, but Oxford and Cambridge upheld Henry's view.

The universities and the annulment of marriage

Cranmer himself undertook to pronounce Henry's marriage with Katherine as invalid, and he celebrated the King's union with Anne Boleyn. The ceremony was performed in private. Parliament now stepped in too, and by the *Act of Appeals* forbade all appeals to Rome in matters of will, marriage, or divorce, either for the future or already entered on: henceforth the appeal was to go to the Upper House of Convocation. Henry could control that.

Appeals to Rome forbidden (1533)

By the time Parliament met for its fifth session Katherine had been put aside, and the marriage with Anne publicly acknowledged. Matters having been driven to this extreme point, Parliament was still bolder. For the first time it spoke of the Pope as "the Bishop of Rome otherwise called the Pope"; arranged that bishops for the future were to be elected by the dean and chapter of the diocese under a royal writ called the *congé d'élire*, but that they must elect the person named by the king in the writ — conferring a liberty with one hand and taking it back with the other. Peter's pence and every other payment made to Rome were

Marriage of Henry and Anne acknowledged

Payments to Rome stopped



stopped. No church ordinances were to be made save by the king's consent. Yet in case the Pope should even at the eleventh hour repent, Henry was again empowered to suspend or enforce these acts at his pleasure. Further, by the *First Royal Succession Act* the marriage with Katherine was declared null, and Katherine's daughter Mary cut out of the succession.

Between the fifth and sixth sessions the Pope annulled Cranmer's sentence dissolving the marriage, and to this the King retorted with a Royal Proclamation ordering all manner of prayers, mass-books, and rubrics "wherein the Bishop of Rome is named or his presumptuous proud pomp preferred", to be abolished, "and his name and memory to be never more remembered". Parliament followed this up with the *Act of Supremacy* declaring the King to be the supreme Head of the Church of England, and an oath was exacted calling on men to refuse all obedience to any foreign authority, and to accept all Acts made by the present Parliament. For refusing to take this oath the Chancellor, Sir Thomas More,<sup>1</sup> and Bishop Fisher were imprisoned.

The seventh and last session saw the overthrow of the smaller monasteries. As the King had now absorbed all the ecclesiastical powers which the Pope had formerly wielded in England, he had become visitor of the religious houses, which had hitherto been under the control only of the officers of their own order and of the Pope. They were soon to learn what a visitation meant. All of less annual value than £200 were suppressed, and their lands forfeited to the King. With this last blow delivered the Reformation Parliament ended. Many of these monasteries deserved to be suppressed. Throughout the Middle Ages inquiries had often been held into the state of monasteries, and action taken where required. Wolsey had previously found much amiss with some of the smaller houses and had suppressed

<sup>1</sup> More had accepted the divorce and the Anti-papal legislation of Parliament, but he would not accept the supremacy of the King as expressed in the oath.



them, and, indeed, few could object to the action Henry now took. These small institutions had outlived their usefulness and in many cases become places of idleness and vice.

Looking at the work of Henry and his Parliament as a whole two things emerge. To begin with, there never was a Reformation so completely political. Neither justice nor sentiment was allowed to interfere with business, and we may consider that the stopping of payments of money to Rome was the prime motive of the parties who carried through the severance. (*Note 42.*)

Reformation a political movement

Secondly, we must observe that the Reformation Parliament, which had overthrown the Pope, raised the Crown to a height unmatched before or since in English history. Besides seizing for himself all the Papal powers and much of the Church's property, Henry had been permitted to enforce statutes or not as seemed good to him; the succession had been practically left in his hands; he was armed with a new Treason Act which made even *thought* against him treasonable.

Power of Crown increased

These two qualities of the Reformation Parliament's work are reflected from the man who, under Henry, had most to do with the shaping of it. *Thomas Cromwell* was a lawyer who had grown rich by moneylending, had sat in the House of Commons, and had served Wolsey. But he was essentially a King's man at heart: not a Cardinal's. His early days of adventure in Italy had made him familiar with despotic power ruthlessly exercised, and he stopped at nothing to make the King supreme. As "Vicar General" under the Act of Supremacy, he devised the measures which brought the Church under the King. He restricted even the right of preaching to those who held royal licenses, forced the clergy to preach in favour of the Act of Supremacy, overthrew first the smaller monasteries and then the larger, turned over their property to the Crown, and swept out of his way all opposition. Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher, the foremost scholar and the most saintly bishop of

Thomas Cromwell

Cromwell as Vicar General

Execution of More and Fisher

the day, were executed for refusing to accept the Act of Supremacy. The monks of the Charterhouse were hanged in a batch on the same charge, or left to die in chains in Newgate. When the dissolution of the smaller monasteries

Revolt of  
the Pil-  
grimage  
of Grace  
(1536)

provoked the north to rebellion in 1536, Cromwell never faltered. This "Pilgrimage of Grace", as the rebellion was called, was dangerous enough, for it was inspired by very genuine religious alarm. Men in the north who were more firmly Catholic than the south, less ready for the new ideas, believed that the attack on the monasteries would be followed by an onslaught on the churches. The rebels, led by Robert Aske, took as their banner the Five Wounds of Christ, and demanded that the monasteries should be restored, the reforming bishops turned out, and Cromwell banished.

Attack on  
Cromwell

Rebels  
joined by  
Northern  
Earls

This last aim brought in the northern nobles, for Cromwell was looked on with mingled loathing and fear by the old nobility, as an upstart venomous snake. The Percies, Lords Westmorland and Latimer, Earl Dacre of Yorkshire, all joined; and these could bring the finest fighting men in England with them. Abbots and priors all gathered to the cause; the Abbot of Barlings rode up in full armour. Henry sent Norfolk to meet the rebels; but as he was too weak to fight, bade him make terms. He was only waiting his time; the rebels dispersed, but renewed rioting soon after gave Henry and Cromwell the excuse for revoking all that they had yielded. The leaders were seized; Lord Darcy, Lord Hussey, and the Abbots of four great monasteries were all hanged. Lesser rebels shared the same fate in dozens throughout the north. It was a stern lesson in what the Royal Supremacy meant.

Revolt  
put down

Dissolu-  
tion of the  
greater  
mon-  
asteries

This failure of the "Pilgrimage of Grace" led to the downfall of the greater monasteries. Some were forfeited for treason; others found it wisest to submit to the King. The monks were pensioned. Six of the great monasteries were refounded as secular chapters round the six new bishoprics; a little of the property was used for schools;

a little for erecting fortresses on the coast. But the bulk of it went to the King; and he dispersed most of it — some by gift to his ministers and courtiers, much by sale — so that in a few years it had passed into many hands, and thus afforded an effectual guarantee that the Reformation would be permanent. If England were to submit again to Rome, that land would have to be restored; and in the course of a few years it was so parcelled up that 40,000 families were reckoned to have an interest in it, and these 40,000 would be sturdy Protestants. It was on this rock that Mary's schemes for restoring Roman influence shipwrecked. To take this land back by force was impossible; she had not money to buy it back. The effect of the dissolution of the greater monasteries on the economic life of England was considerable. The monks had been very large land-owners, but their methods had been old-fashioned and had been wasteful in the amount of labour employed. Now came new landlords and new methods. Sheep-farming and enclosures led to the employment of fewer men, and distress due to unemployment was made worse.

The very year which had seen the rebellion of the Pilgrimage of Grace had been marked by a great event in Henry's private life. He had married Anne Boleyn in 1533 and their daughter Elizabeth was born in September of that year. But Henry's great wish for a son had not been fulfilled. Anne's son, like those of Katherine of Aragon, died at birth. When Katherine died in January, 1536, Anne had already lost her hold on the King's affection, and on the very day of her rival's funeral she knew that her fate was sealed when she again gave birth to a child that did not survive. Within three months she was arrested, tried, and executed (19th May, 1536). Before the month was ended Henry married his third wife, Jane Seymour. Jane was to give Henry what he so ardently desired, a son. A boy was born in October, 1537, and christened Edward, his mother surviving his birth for only ten days. He was the undoubted heir whom

Henry's  
marriages  
and the  
succes-  
sion

Henry desired, for when Jane was married, both her predecessors were dead, and there could be no doubt as to the position of her son.

The remainder of Henry VIII's reign bears no very marked characteristic, either of progress or reaction. Some men deplored what had been done; others felt that a halt had been called too soon. Yet both these were small parties; the bulk of the nation was for the time quite satisfied, and the King was satisfied too.

One important step was taken in the translation of the Bible. Most of the copies of Tyndale's version, printed abroad and smuggled into England, had been destroyed. Miles Coverdale was encouraged by Cromwell to make a new translation; this was combined in 1537 with Tyndale's work by John Rogers, who published it under the assumed name of Matthew. The King was persuaded to license it; and Cranmer having written a preface for it, the "*Great Bible*" was placed in the churches. Private persons were also allowed to have copies. Although in 1543 the liberty of reading the Bible was withdrawn from "husbandmen, workmen, and women except gentlewomen", yet in 1544 the Litany and in 1545 services for morning and evening prayer were issued in English.

While the Bible was thus placed in the hands of the people, no encouragement was given to depart from the old faith, and indeed, belief in the doctrines of the Church was insisted upon. Opposed to Cranmer and the Reformers in doctrine stood the Duke of Norfolk, leader of the nobles; Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester; Bonner, Bishop of London; and, above all, Henry himself. Their attitude is expressed in the statute of *Six Articles* (1539), which was intended as a dam to the rising tide of the Reformation. It enjoined (1) a belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation; (2) the practice of communion in one kind; (3) the illegality of the marriage of the clergy; (4) the necessity of keeping

Effect on  
economic  
life of  
England

Transla-  
tion of  
the Bible

The  
"Great  
Bible"

Henry  
upholds  
Catholic  
doctrine

The Six  
Articles  
(1539)

vows of chastity; (5) the continuance of private masses; (6) the use of confession. It will be seen that these maintain a great part of the essentials of the old faith. Having added the penalty of death for the first infraction of the first article, and for the second breach of any of the others, Parliament felt comfortably assured that under no circumstances could those who kept the Six Articles be accused of being heretics.

This extremely definite declaration against any attempt to change doctrine was followed by the downfall of Cromwell. In 1539 he had wished to strengthen the Protestant princes in Germany by an English alliance, and he persuaded the King to promise to marry Anne, sister of the Duke of Cleves. Cromwell attempts a Protestant alliance The alliance broke down; but Henry, who had now been wifeless for four years, determined to keep his promise. Anne had been represented to him as beautiful; she was, however, exceedingly plain, and though Henry manfully went through with the marriage, he at once procured a divorce from his "Flanders mare". He showed his annoyance with Cromwell; and Cromwell's enemies, the nobles with Norfolk at their head, at once turned on him. His failure He was attainted on an absurd charge of treason and executed (1540). His execution (*Note 43.*)

Little calls for notice between 1540 and 1547. The war with Scotland falls in its place in the chapter on Scottish history. The King married twice more: first, Catharine Howard, and then, after her execution for misconduct, Catharine Parr. In order to make it easier for the government to pay its debts, the coinage was much debased; but the effects of that measure belong to the reign of Edward VI. Almost the last thing that the King did was to cause the Earl of Surrey (Norfolk's son) to be put to death for aiming at the Crown.

So the reign ended as it had begun — with the headsman's axe: and in truth this political engine, with its less dignified helpmeet the halter, is so prominent that we are tempted

at first to think the reign particularly blood-stained. It did not present that aspect to men of its own time. After the long-drawn-out disorders of the Wars of the Roses, and the nervous dread of their revival in Henry VII's day, Henry VIII's time was a period of peace and prosperity. England was "merry", and "good King Harry" popular even to the end. He was neither merciful, nor logical, nor faithful, nor grateful. But he knew what he wanted and what England wanted, and he took the first and gave the second without scruple of conscience.

## CHAPTER 23

## SCOTLAND FROM 1329 TO 1542

Scotland  
since the  
14th cen-  
tury

Since the final defeat of Edward I's scheme of annexation England and Scotland had influenced each other but little. They had remained bad neighbours; fighting on the Borders had been almost continuous; Scotland had steadily adhered to her alliance with France; every now and again quarrelling had developed into open wars in which Scotland usually lost the battles. No real progress had been made towards union. Now the time is at hand when the two countries were at last to find a common aim and a common interest in their religion; and while sympathy thus drew them closer, fortune — and Elizabeth's sagacity — gave the chance of the two crowns to join in the person of James I. It is therefore desirable to cast a glance over the policy and social condition of Scotland during these two hundred years of hostility, in order to see how in the end the two nations came together. (*Note 45.*)

Death of  
Robert the  
Bruce  
(1329)

Robert Bruce died in 1329, having survived but one year after the Treaty of Northampton, and his son David, aged five years, became king.

The purpose of this chapter is not to attempt any continuous account of Scotland under David II and the Stuart



kings, but merely to remark what were the general characteristics of the time; to observe, therefore, (1) *the main relations with England*, who, as Scotland's domineering neighbour, was bound to influence her politics most deeply; (2) *the French alliance*, to which Scotland was permanently faithful, on the principle of a common enmity with England; (3) *the elements of disorder at home*, such as powerful barons and fierce Highlanders, who harassed king after king, and hindered progress in the country. For more than two hundred years invasion from without or rebellion at home tended to paralyse Scotland.

Characteristics of Scottish policy in the 14th century

David II's reign saw both invasion and rebellion at work. Edward Balliol, son of John, and the "Disinherited", Scottish nobles who had lost their estates because they had supported England, were tempted to try a stroke to regain their lands when King Robert was gone. They defeated the King's forces at *Dupplin Moor*, near Perth, in 1332,<sup>1</sup> and Edward Balliol was crowned as a vassal king. Four months later, however, he was driven out of Scotland, and in 1333 Edward III marched north and defeated the Scots at *Halidon Hill*. The English overran the country; Edward Balliol returned, and the little King David was sent for safety to France. Then, however, Edward became absorbed in French wars; in 1337 Edward Balliol was driven out, and by degrees Scotland regained her lost fortresses.

David II (1329-70)

War with England (1333)

The constant aim of Edward III's Scottish policy was to break the Franco-Scottish Alliance. His plan to subjugate Scotland had failed, so now he tried more diplomatic methods—he proposed to the Scots that if they would abandon the French cause, he would restore to them the Lowland counties which had been handed over to him by Balliol in 1334. David II, who had returned from France in 1341, eventually decided to stand by France, and in 1346, when Edward III was besieging Calais, he led an expedition into England. He was defeated and captured at the battle

Franco-Scottish Alliance

<sup>1</sup> See p. 193.



Scots defeated at Neville's Cross (1346) of *Neville's Cross*, near Durham, and all the lowland areas which Scotland had recently regained again fell into English hands.

David was a prisoner in England for eleven years, but was released in 1357, his ransom being fixed at 100,000 merks to be paid within ten years. This sum, huge at that time, was a sore burden on Scotland, but Scotland shouldered it — the country could not be free while the King was in captivity. The King himself was not worth one merk, let alone 100,000, and hatred for his uncle and heir, Robert the Steward, led him to propose that an English prince should succeed him. This project was indignantly vetoed by the Scottish Parliament in 1364, and from that time onward, Scottish independence was never again in danger.

To conclude the relations between England and Scotland, we must note that fighting on the Borders went on pretty constantly during the latter half of the fourteenth century, the most picturesque event being the great moonlight affray of

War:  
Otterburn  
(1388).  
Homildon  
Hill  
(1402)

Otterburn (1388). But during this time, and under the Lancastrian kings, no serious attempt was made by England to press the conquest of Scotland. The only considerable battle of the time is *Homildon Hill* (1402), where the Earl of Douglas, raiding the north, was waylaid and defeated by the Percies. The battle had important results in the history of England, for it led up to that great league of Percy, Glendower, Douglas, and Mortimers, which harassed Henry IV; but, save that it once more showed the helplessness of the Scots against English archery, it had no result on Scotland. The Scots clung to their French alliance, and sent men to fight in France against Henry V and Bedford; they helped to win Beaugé (the first turn of the tide, 1422); and Douglas, keeping up his reputation,<sup>1</sup> lost another battle at Verneuil — and his life this time. Stewart of Darnley was killed at the "Battle of the Herrings", and other Scots fought in

<sup>1</sup> He was nicknamed the "Tineman" (the *Lose-man*), and justified it by losing the battles of Homildon, Shrewsbury, and Verneuil.

the Maid of Orleans' company. But in Henry VI's reign England's hands were too full with French troubles for her to be able to resent these Scottish unfriendlinesses effectively; and then came on the Wars of the Roses, so that till Tudor times Scotland was left mainly to herself. Her internal calamities now call for mention.

David II had died in 1370, leaving no heir, and the crown passed to a grandson of Bruce through his daughter Marjory and her husband, Walter the Steward. This grandson came to the throne as Robert II, and began the line of the unlucky house of Stuart. Six kings and one queen descended from him sat on the throne of Scotland. Of these only one (Robert III) had a peaceful end, and he, before his death, saw one of his sons cruelly murdered and the other a prisoner in England. Robert III, too, was the only one to attain old age; none of the others lived to be forty-five; three of them were cut off ere they had entered on the second half of life's natural span; James I was murdered; James II killed by the bursting of a cannon at the siege of Roxburgh; James III assassinated; James IV killed at Flodden; James V died of a broken heart; his daughter had the worst fate of all, for she perished on the scaffold after nineteen years of captivity. Yet, unlucky as the kings were, their country was even more so. Not the least misfortune, inevitably following on the premature deaths of the kings, was the constant succession of minorities. James I succeeded at the age of eleven; James II at six; James III at nine; James IV had reached fifteen. But James V was not eighteen months old when he came to the throne, and his daughter Mary at her accession was aged but one week. So minority followed minority, and regency regency, with every opening for ambition and violence; year after year, and reign after reign, war followed rebellion and rebellion followed war in dreary succession. National independence was a good thing, but no use could be made of it while there was neither order nor firm government. A king could do

The  
House of  
Stuart

Robert II  
(1370-90)

Misfor-  
tunes of  
the house

little for his people so long as his whole resources were being strained to crush the great families into obedience.

Robert III was more or less a cripple, and the government fell into the hands of his brother, the Duke of Albany, and he, with Douglas (the Tineman), was concerned with the arrest of Robert's eldest son, Rothesay, and probably with his death, which occurred (conveniently) while he was in prison. As the younger son, James, was captured by English vessels while voyaging to France in time of truce in 1406, and Robert III died soon after, Albany had the regency till his death, in 1420. James, however, on his return in 1424, at once struck at the new regent, Murdoch, Duke of Albany, and his two sons. They were executed, and James seized their estates. This stroke was followed up with laws against "bands" (covenants of alliance between nobles), a hanging of disorderly Highland chiefs, the imprisonment of Douglas, and the forfeiture of the earldom of Strathearn. This last proved his undoing, for Sir Robert Graham, heir to Strathearn, hatched a plot in the Highlands to murder the King. The chance soon came. James went to Perth to keep Christmas, and was lodged in the Monastery of Black Friars. Late at night the conspirators burst noisily in; the King, who had been sitting with the Queen and her ladies, was stabbed to death by Graham.

Murder of  
James I  
at Perth

James II  
(1437-60).

The  
Douglas  
family

The next reign, that of James II, saw the culmination and fall of the power of the "Black" Douglasses. As that house played in Scotland somewhat the same part as the family of Neville (the Kingmaker) played in England almost at the same time, it is worth following in a little detail.

James II was a boy of six, and Archibald Douglas (fifth earl) was his regent. This earl was unenterprising for a Douglas, and died in 1439 without having distinguished his regency by anything in particular. The Earldom of Douglas, but not the regency, passed to William (sixth earl). This William, a boy of seventeen, was in a position that reminds one of that of Richard Neville the younger. Duke of Tour-

The  
"Black  
Douglas"

aine, Earl of Douglas, owning land in Scotland right across the Lowlands, able to bring 5000 men of the best fighting quality into the field, himself with a title to the Crown, for he was great-grandson on the female side of Robert III, he was by far the most powerful subject of the King of Scotland. The King's ministers — Crichton the Chancellor, who was Governor of Edinburgh Castle, and Livingstone, the King's Guardian, lately at feud with each other — united to set a trap for Douglas. He and his brother David were invited to Edinburgh Castle to meet the young King. At dinner the Douglas brothers were seized, hurried into the castle-yard, and beheaded (1440).<sup>1</sup>

The leadership of the house of Douglas passed, after a few troubled years, to another William (eighth earl). For some years James II was on friendly terms with Douglas. But in 1452, when James was twenty-one, he decided that the quarrels between Douglas and other nobles (such as Crichton, Livingstone, and the Earl of Crawford) were ruining the land. Accordingly he invited the Douglas to Stirling, where the two dined and supped together; then the King accused him of being in "a band" with the Earls of Ross and Crawford to rebel, and bade him break the band. Douglas refused, and thereon the King dirked him. The ninth Earl — James, brother to the murdered man — naturally fell into rebellion and treason with Henry VI. He was forgiven for a time, again intrigued with the English and the Highlanders, gathered an army and was overthrown at Arkinholm in Eskdale, and fled to England. So fell the family of the Black Douglas; but the King was not quit of them, for he had won the day only with the help of the younger branch, the Red Douglasses, Earls of Angus. These were to prove as intolerable as the elder branch had been.

Ruin  
of the  
Black  
Douglas

In 1460 James II was killed at Roxburgh by the bursting of a bombard. James III being but nine, there followed the

<sup>1</sup> This is the occasion on which the famous "black bull's head" (the sign of death) was said to have been placed on the table.

(F 938)

**James III**  
(1460-88) usual regency. Kennedy, Bishop of St. Andrews, an honest and patriotic statesman, favoured the Lancastrian cause. Edward IV won over the queen-mother, and allied with the exiled Douglas and some of the Highlanders. So the re-bound of the Wars of the Roses led to more fighting in Scotland and on the Borders. When James grew up he quarrelled violently with his two brothers. The elder played the usual traitor's part, made alliance with England, claimed the crown as Edward IV's liegeman, and marched with an English army, led by Richard of Gloucester, into Scotland. James summoned his nobles to his assistance, and they gathered under Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus. But before fighting the enemy they had a grudge of their own to settle. James, who was a peaceful man, with refined tastes, had made friends with men who had some skill in music and architecture — chief of them Robert Cochrane, a mason — “a person of mean and sober estate”, as a chronicler calls him. The nobles hated this favourite, and wished to overthrow him, yet did not see the means to do it. “I will bell the cat,” cried Angus to them — hence his nickname, “Archibald Bell-the-cat” — and he kept his word by marching to the King's aid, arresting Cochrane in his tent, and hanging him from Lauder Bridge (1482). James himself was made prisoner and sent to Edinburgh Castle, and Angus and his friends made terms with Albany. Then Albany and Angus quarrelled, and Albany was for a short time reconciled to the King. He soon broke with him, however, and intrigued with England, whither he fled in 1483. In the following year he and the Earl of Douglas led an English force into Dumfriesshire, but it was defeated. Albany escaped to France, where he was killed in 1485. Three years later a new conspiracy was formed against the King by Angus and the southern barons who had in their power the fifteen-year-old Prince James (afterwards James IV). In June, 1488, the King and the northern nobles met and were defeated by the insurgents at Sauchieburn,

**English  
invade  
Scotland**

**Conspir-  
acy  
against  
James III**

**Revolt of  
Angus**

**Death of  
James  
after  
Sauchie-  
burn  
(1488)**

near Stirling. James was killed — perhaps murdered — after the battle.

Ominously as James IV's reign had been preluded with the son in arms against the father, it showed for a time promise of better things. The King grew strong, and enforced the law; one curse of Scotland, disorder at home, died down. An alliance made with England by the marriage of James with Margaret Tudor (Henry VII's elder daughter), checked the fighting on the Border; while the Highlands were kept in control. The country prospered, and the reign was rightly spoken of as a "golden age". So, till the death of Henry VII, all went well. When Henry VIII succeeded, the royal brothers-in-law began to bicker on personal matters. The old fascinations of the French alliance attracted James, and so, when Henry entered a European league against France, he, like a knight-errant, adventured and lost all at Flodden (1513) where he was completely defeated by Surrey. The battle was for Scotland a shattering blow. High and low alike, from palace, castle, town, and cottage, were stricken there. Surrey's work was done; there was no need to go farther; more than a century was to pass ere a Scottish army was again to penetrate into England.

James IV  
(1488-  
1513)

Marriage  
alliance  
with  
England

Quarrel  
with  
England  
(1513)

Flodden  
(1513)

James V's reign was in the main a repetition of the reigns of James II and James III. The internal feuds revived; the country was distracted between warring houses struggling for the possession of the King. This disorder was increased by the part played by Henry VIII and his ministers, who fostered an "English" party (of traitors) in Scotland, and, further, by the beginnings of the Reformation; obviously, when the Tudor King became the enemy of Rome, the Stuart King clung more closely to the old faith. For the present, merely noting that at first the beginnings of the Reformation tended to widen the gulf between the nations instead of closing it, we may leave the story of the Reformation in Scotland till Mary's reign.

James V  
(1513-42)

After Flodden the chief persons left to rule Scotland were



Regency of Margaret and Douglas the queen, Margaret Tudor, Angus (head of the Red Douglases), and Arran (head of the Hamiltons). Within a year the queen married Angus, and henceforth the Douglases were the English party in Scotland, in constant traitorous correspondence with Henry VIII.

France was naturally perturbed at the power wielded by the English party, and, in 1515, the Duke of Albany, son of the traitor duke of James III's reign and heir-presumptive to the Scottish Crown, came to Scotland as regent. Margaret and Angus fled to England, but returned a few years later and became bitter enemies. Albany left Scotland in 1524, and the King came under the power of his mother, who had divorced Angus. Then Angus secured the King. Eventually James escaped to his mother at Stirling, and rallying to him those who hated the Douglas rule and their treason with England, was able to make himself king in reality. Angus was driven into exile in England, where he became a pensioner of King Henry.

The last fifteen years of the reign were fairly prosperous. On the whole there was peace with England, and this kept treason at home within bounds. James did something to pacify the Borders by clapping the great Border lords in hold, and going round hanging notorious rascals. He made a similar tour round the Highlands, established some garrisons, imprisoned some chiefs, and took the Lordship of the Isles for the Crown. There was talk of reform of the Church, and the College of Justice was set up in Edinburgh. But though outwardly there was peace with England, Henry and James were not at one; Henry, having severed himself from Rome, desired James to do the like, and break from the Auld Alliance with France. James had no mind to lose his old friend and the support of Rome. Further, his marriage policy vexed Henry. First, he married Madeleine, daughter of Francis I, when Henry had ideas for him to marry his own daughter, Mary. When his first queen died James went again to France and espoused Mary of Guise,



whom Henry had his eye on for his own fourth bride. Henry had to content himself with Anne of Cleves — a further source of vexation. Then James refused an interview with his uncle, and gradually the two kings drifted into war. An English raid, with Angus traitorously leading it, was badly beaten in Teviotdale. In reply James mustered his nobles at Fala Muir in 1542, but they refused to follow him in an invasion. Borderers, however, were always ready to fight, and the King collected a mass of them in the West Marches, and at the last moment put them under a friend, Oliver Sinclair, a commoner whom the Scottish nobles disdained to follow. Wharton, the English Warden, had early news of the raid, and advanced with about two thousand men to repel it. The Scots were caught between the Esk and a morass; they made a disorderly retreat, which soon turned to a hopeless panic. The rout was complete. The "battle" of *Solway Moss* was finished before it had begun. All the guns were lost, 1200 men were captured, many more were drowned; the English lost seven men.

Invasades  
England

Defeated  
at Solway  
Moss  
(1542)

The disgrace of it crushed King James. A fortnight later a daughter was born to him. "It came with a lass, and it will go with a lass," was all he found to say. In a sort of stupor, murmuring at intervals, "Fie, fled Oliver!" the poor King lingered another week, and died at Falkland.

Birth of  
Mary  
Stuart

The story of the first five Jameses is tragic, but that Scotland survived through all the internal feuds and recurrent minorities is evidence of how firmly based was the sentiment of essential unity and of national independence. But not only did Scotland survive, she also progressed; in the fifteenth century trade increased, the legal system developed, and the three universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen were founded, while under the five Jameses a great Scottish literature grew up. James I, Robert Henryson, William Dunbar, Gavin Douglas, Sir David Lindsay, are the outstanding names of the "Golden Age of Scottish Poetry".

## CHAPTER 29

## EDWARD VI (1547-1553)

**The succession** Henry VIII had been empowered by Parliament to settle the succession in his will, and he left the throne first to his son Edward; if he died without an heir, the crown was to go to his daughter Mary; if her line failed, to Elizabeth; and finally, to the descendants of Henry's younger sister, Mary. It will be noticed that Henry's presage of the failure of descendants came true; but his will was not completely carried out, for the crown in the end passed to the descendants of his elder sister, the Scottish line, which he passed over.

**Regency** Meanwhile, as Edward was only nine, a Regency was inevitable, and everything would turn on the political and religious ideas of the Regency. Henry had nominated a council, with men of different shades of opinion included in it, in the hope that it would do nothing but maintain things as they were. Yet here again Henry's plans failed, **Somerset, the Protector** for the young King's uncle, Seymour, managed to win over to his side part of the council, and got himself declared Lord Protector of the Realm. With their help, and adding to himself the title of the Duke of Somerset, he prepared to put his ideas into practice.

**Difficulties before the new Government** There are two main lines to be distinguished in Somerset's policy. First, he had to deal with *economic changes* which were producing much distress, and second, with the question of religion. (*Note 46.*)

**Social and religious troubles** Several serious dangers lay ahead of him; opportunities which might be taken, but which if neglected would prove fatal. To begin with, there was a growing party desirous of further change in religion, some of them genuinely anxious for a complete form of Protestantism, others merely greedy for further plunder of property devoted to religious uses. This party, though prominent, was small; large masses of

the country, especially in the conservative north and west, were opposed to any meddling with their old faith. Besides religious trouble there was serious economic distress. Ever since the Black Death the process of converting corn land into pasture, often by driving off the old manorial tenants,<sup>1</sup> had been going forward. As sheep-farming employed fewer men, there were many left without work. This distress was aggravated by the dissolution of the monasteries. The monks had been old-fashioned landlords, often well content with old ways and employing large numbers of men. The new owners of the monastery lands were active "improvers", with no respect for custom or old tenants. And where distress had existed the monasteries had done something to relieve it. Further trouble was caused by Henry's debased coin, for money no longer circulated at its face value; when men were in doubt whether a shilling was worth a shilling or only sixpence, all business transactions were upset, and the evil tended to grow. Not all the coin was bad; but men naturally were unwilling to part with good shillings when they got them, and strove to pay away the bad coins. The good money was hoarded, or even melted down for the sake of the silver, and the bad money took its place. Thus, with doubt and division in religious matters, widespread distress in agriculture, and confusion in all business transactions, the new Lord Protector would have his hands full. Another important, though less urgent question, would also demand attention — that of the young King's marriage. In all these matters Somerset failed, the more lamentably since, though he was an enlightened and honest man, the goodness of his ideas was quite obscured by the badness of the methods which he employed to carry them out. In aims his policy was admirable, in results purely disastrous.

At the outset he had an opportunity which had not been given to any English statesman since Edward I — the

Economic  
distress

Conversion of  
arable  
land to  
pasture

New  
methods  
of new  
landlords

Debased  
coinage

<sup>1</sup> See p. 210.

Somer-  
set's  
Scottish  
policy  
VI. Scotland being divided between a French Catholic party, headed by the Queen-mother, Mary of Guise, and an "English" party, who favoured a Reformation, Somerset's plain duty was to take care not to unite these parties in the one thing in which they could be united, namely, in a common hatred of England. This, however, he at once proceeded to do. Finding that his scheme of betrothal was not at once kindly received, he marched an army into Scotland which utterly defeated the Scots at *Pinkie Cleugh* (1547). This was not the way to win Scotland. Huntly put the Scottish feeling into memorable words: "I mislike not the match, but the manner of the wooing". The little Queen was sent over to France, where she was shortly affianced to the Dauphin. Somerset's hasty violence had ruined his own plans.

The First  
Prayer  
Book  
(1549)  
In religious matters he acted just as rashly. Convinced that England was ready to go much further with the Reformation, he ordered the abolishing of the mass and of the use of Latin in the service. Cranmer was asked to draw up a service in English, and this he did, the *First Prayer Book* being compiled by him. Cranmer's beautiful prose gave that service a dignity and beauty which have come down to us to-day.

Changes  
in the  
churches  
Images  
and  
pictures  
destroyed  
Somerset next sent commissioners round the country to pull down the images in the churches and destroy the pictures on the walls. As some of the commissioners' servants carried out these orders in an offensive way, parading the streets dressed as mock-priests, and burning the pictures, this caused intense anger in all the old-fashioned parts of the country. For time out of mind generation after generation had used the same service, and, in their own simple way, had treasured it as the sacred ground whereon men may approach to the presence of God; unnumbered prayers

had been uttered before images which helped dull minds to contemplate their Redeemer and the saints; sacred pictures had hallowed and beautified churches, and had grown to be loved for the permanence of the blessed hopes they had given to one sorrowful heart after another. Now all were rudely swept away, and to the simple country folk it seemed as if the gateway of heaven had been closed, and new prison-houses with whitewashed walls put in the place of the many mansions of the blest on earth.

On minds still in bewilderment, seeking reasons for this change, fell another blow, but this time chiefly on the towns. **Gilds abolished**  
The old gilds, so common in every town, were almost as familiar in men's lives as their religion. They had had many objects: some, such as the regulation of trades, declining in value; some taking the shape of festivities and miracle plays, more amusing perhaps than useful; some chiefly religious in aim; others, however, were of great practical use. Were a gildsman sick or in distress, he looked to his gild for aid; if his tools were stolen or his house burnt, his gild helped him. If he died in poverty his gild buried him, educated his children, looked after his widow, and paid for masses for the repose of his soul. If a man wished to leave money or lands in charity, he left it to his gild, and, as this form of bequest was common, many of the gilds were rich. The greedy eye of the Government fell on them; they, like the monasteries, held much property devoted to religious uses in the shape of masses for the dead. And so an Act was passed confiscating their property; in theory their religious property — in reality everything that could be seized. **Forfeiture of gild property**  
The effect was something as if at the present day the Government were to seize the property of all benefit societies, sick clubs, and workmen's friendly societies. Here again was a measure angering and injuring masses of poor men, all the more offensive because the London gilds were spared, being, it may be supposed, too dangerous to molest.

Results of  
policy

Trouble was not long in coming. Somerset's brother, Lord Seymour of Sudely, first plotted a rebellion. He had married Henry VIII's widow, Catharine Parr, and sought to make for himself a position like that of Warwick the Kingmaker. He coined money and forged cannon in his own foundries, fortified Holt Castle, and intrigued against the Protector. The Council dealt with him by Act of Attainder, and had him executed; but the treasonable schemes of so near a relation did Somerset no good. Next, further proof of the Protector's failure was provided by two insurrections, which burst out at the same time in the west and in the east, and here once more Somerset's incapacity was made plain. These insurrections were caused by quite different motives, and were dealt with differently, and we have to distinguish between the two.

Rebellion

Religious  
revolt in  
the west

The insurrection in the west, where men were still mainly Catholic in faith, was entirely religious in character; it was caused by the *New Prayer Book* of 1549, which had been put in place of the old service. In the eastern counties there was no religious discontent, for Norfolk and the east, owing partly to immigrants from the Low Countries, was strongly Protestant. Rebellion here sprang from social causes: the enclosures of commons and arable land for the purpose of sheep-farming had thrown many out of work; the debased coinage had upset all manufacturers and all workmen, all wages and all prices; in Norwich and the towns men were indignant at the confiscation of the gilds. Thus at the same moment the most widely severed parts of the country, the poorest and the richest — the backward, agricultural, Catholic west, and the progressive, manufacturing, Protestant east — were each driven to rebellion.

Economic  
revolt in  
the east

Western  
Rebellion  
severely  
dealt with

There is only one thing which a Government can do with rebellion, and that is to put it down. Inquiry into the reasons for it, sympathy with men misled into it, remedy for the causes of it, can only come after, namely, when the rebels have laid down arms and become once more citizens.



This the well-meaning Somerset did not see. For the Devonshire rebels, in arms for their old religion, he had no sympathy and no mercy. It was indeed some time before he had the upper hand of them. Through the summer of 1549 the west was in a flame; 10,000 men, under Pomeroy and Arundel, in arms; the mass everywhere celebrated; and Exeter besieged. So urgent was the danger that a body of German mercenaries had to be taken into the Government service. These under Lord Grey de Wilton met the rebels at St. Mary Clyst and Sampford Courtenay, and, with every advantage of arms and discipline, had hard work to overcome them. Some four thousand were killed in these fierce combats, and at the end the leaders were hanged at Tyburn, and so order was restored.

Somerset, so stern in the west, where German firelocks were turned against English peasants, was in the east mild to the point of feebleness. With the great body of rebels, who, under their leaders *Robert* and *William Ket*, encamped on Mousehold Hill, outside Norwich, dominating the town, and levying provisions from the gentry round about, he felt some sympathy, for he had realized the evils of the enclosures and of the bad money, and meant in time to mend them. Hence he tried to make terms. This only encouraged the rebels to remain under arms. Inevitably, fighting began between them and the neighbouring gentry, and the Council naturally turned from Somerset to a stronger man. They ordered the Earl of Warwick (afterwards Duke of Northumberland) to attack the rebels, which he did with great vigour, slaughtering a number and dispersing the rest.

With this reputation as a man of energy, Warwick turned to overthrow Somerset. The Protector's failures had been many; his rivals in the Council were jealous of him; he had no strong party behind him. In 1551 he submitted to the Council, and was sent to the Tower; pardoned for the time, he was restored to his place in the Council; but Warwick feared him too much to leave him in peace, and

Ket's  
Rebellion:  
Somerset's  
leniency

Warwick  
subdues  
rebels

Fall of  
Somerset



in January, 1552, he was executed on a charge of conspiracy.

So fell Somerset, one of those tragic failures, an honest and well-meaning man, whose real fault was that he was in advance of his time. Misled into thinking that the opinions round him in London and at court were held throughout the country, mistaken in his belief that the nation, which under Henry VIII had thrown off the yoke of Rome with such enthusiasm, was really anxious for a reform in doctrine, rash in his changes, yet, in spite of his failures, many in England loved him. At his execution those near the scaffold dipped handkerchiefs in his blood to treasure as relics of a good man. He was, after all, honest, which is more than can be said for the man who followed him.

At the date of Somerset's death Edward VI was nearly fifteen. All had the highest hopes of him. The nation looked forward to the rule of a king who would sweep away all the failures of the Regency. "When he comes of age," cried an enthusiastic Hampshire squire, "he will hang up an hundred heretic knaves." Probably such methods would not have overmuch distressed a king who noted coldly in his diary his uncle's death thuswise: "This day the Duke of Somerset had his head cut off between eight and nine o'clock in the morning." As it happened, Edward was destined never to rule.

In 1552 a *Second Prayer Book* was issued, which was more extreme, and closer to the continental doctrines of Reform. It went much further towards Protestantism than the first.<sup>1</sup>

More of the ceremonies of the Church were abolished; Articles of Religion — forty-two in number — were published, and other changes made, all following the ideas of the more extreme Reformers. At the same time some useful steps were taken. To relieve the distress from which the labourers were suffering efforts were made to check the

<sup>1</sup> In the prayer of consecration at the Communion service words were added making the service more clearly one of commemoration only. Some urged, too, that the Communion should not be taken kneeling.

Northumberland  
and  
Edward VI

The  
Second  
Prayer  
Book  
(1552)

The  
42 Articles

enclosures and to revive agriculture; the first *Poor Law* The first Poor Law enacted that collections were to be made in each parish for the poor; and the expenses of the royal household were lessened. Unluckily time, the one great healing element in all political troubles, was lacking; what England needed was stable government, and it became increasingly clear that another change was at hand. Edward's health failed, and the next heir was the Catholic Mary. Where the future was so uncertain, the present was bound to be dark, unsettled, troublous.

To no one was the prospect more menacing than to the Earl of Warwick, who had contrived Somerset's fall, and now ruled in his place. The son of Henry VII's minister, that Dudley whom Henry VIII had put to death chiefly because his enterprise in collecting money for the Crown had made him bitterly hated, Warwick — now created Duke of Northumberland — had proved himself a capable soldier and a successful, if unscrupulous, politician. He had at any rate the politician's instinct of being on the crest of the wave. Neither sincere nor trustworthy, he had taken the side of the extreme Reformers, partly because it agreed with the young King's ideas, partly because he knew that the old nobility who favoured the system of Henry VIII would, if they returned to power, at once overthrow him. But if the honest Somerset could not succeed in making the country accept a form of Protestantism for which it was not yet ready, the dishonest and selfish Northumberland was certain to fail. Balancing thus upon the favour of the young King and the unsteady support of the Council, Northumberland in 1552 found his position becoming more and more precarious as Edward VI's health failed. Accordingly he set to work to secure himself. It was not difficult to convince Edward that, if Mary came to the throne, the Reformation would be undone, and Edward was sincere in his support of the Reformation, even if Northumberland was not. Accordingly, by Northumberland's advice, he made

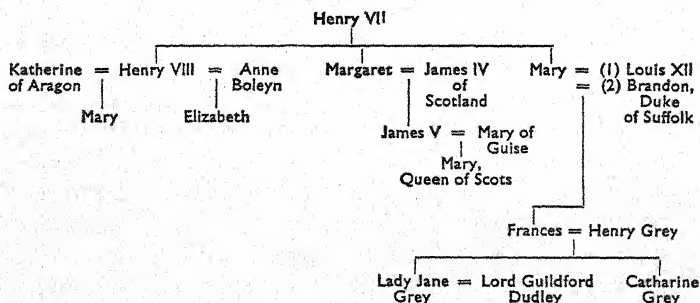
The Protestant succession.

Character of Northumberland

Will of Edward VI

**Lady Jane Grey** a will setting aside both Mary and Elizabeth as illegitimate, and leaving the crown to *Lady Jane Grey*, the granddaughter of Henry VIII's youngest sister. As Northumberland had shortly before married his second son, Lord Guildford Dudley, to Lady Jane, this stroke would not only have secured the Protestant succession, but also the family influence of the Duke himself. He would at any rate be safe, and as father-in-law of the new Queen he might hope to be ruler of the kingdom. (*Note 46.*)

**Failure of Northumberland** If the nation had been set on having a Protestant sovereign, Northumberland's scheme was sound enough. Lady Jane certainly had all the good qualities of a queen. It soon became clear, however, that the nation was not so set. When Edward died, in 1553, Northumberland tried to lay **"The Nine-Days' Queen"** hands on Mary before she learnt the news. But a friend brought her immediate warning, and she slipped away to her Catholic friends, the Howards, in Norfolk. She at once declared herself Queen, and everyone supported her claim. Even in London Northumberland's plans failed hopelessly.



His proclamation of Lady Jane as queen was received in silence or with protest. His son, Lord Robert Dudley, sent to arrest Mary, reached her in Norfolk, but his men would not fight. The fleet declared for Queen Mary. Thousands of men were rallying to her cause. Even Northumberland's own force, which he led into the Eastern Counties, mutinied

and deserted him, and on 20th July, less than a fortnight from Edward's death, he was forced to give up hope, and himself proclaimed Mary queen at Cambridge. If he thought to disarm the anger of a Tudor in this way he was soon undeceived. He was arrested the next day, and sent to the Tower. There he grovelled further, and on the scaffold just before his execution announced that he had been always at heart a Catholic. His recantation earned for him the scorn of the Protestants and he died despised and detested by all.

Execution  
of  
Northum-  
berland

## CHAPTER 30

## MARY TUDOR (1553-1558)

## THE CATHOLIC REACTION

At her accession Mary was thirty-six; half a Spaniard and half a Tudor; neither by age nor blood likely to be easily turned from what she had set her mind on. Moreover, all her life she had been soured. Her mother repudiated and scandalously treated, herself declared illegitimate, her claim to the throne doubted, surrounded by enemies, often held as a sort of prisoner, half a foreigner, holding ardently to the supremacy of Rome which the nation viewed with suspicion, she was by training and faith quite out of sympathy with England. Northumberland was not a wise politician, but he did know what Mary was likely to be as a queen.

England had no such terrors. A Catholic sovereign was not feared, because England had so far never known any other sovereign than a Catholic. Henry VIII, even in his most anti-Roman moments, had never doubted that he was a most sincere Catholic. Edward VI had never ruled; all his reign was filled by Somerset and Northumberland, and if such were examples of Protestant rulers, they were not encouraging. The mass of Englishmen looked on their new

England  
welcomes  
Mary

Queen as a daughter of Harry Tudor, and welcomed her with the loyalty they always gave to all Tudors. The attempts at reform in doctrine under Edward VI had been profoundly unpopular. They wished for a return to the days of "good King Harry". That Mary would try to bring England again under the power of Rome, was ignored in the enthusiastic welcome which was given her.

Hence Mary's brief reign is divided into two parts. First came a period of consolidation, and of reversing the pre-mature reforms made under Edward VI. In the second period the Queen disclosed her real plans, married a Spaniard, and tried to restore the Papal power; and it was during this second period that the persecution was made which left such bitter memories of her reign.

At first, then, Mary and her subjects were at one. By common consent the mass came in again. Parliament, meeting within two months of the Queen's accession, repealed the religious Acts of Edward VI, and went back to the "divine service used in England in the last year of Henry VIII's day". Some of the more prominent Reformers left the kingdom — John Knox, who had been Edward VI's chaplain, among them. Archbishop Cranmer, and the bishops of the same party, Latimer and Ridley, were deprived of their sees, and the old occupants of the sees of Winchester and London, Bishop Gardiner and Bishop Bonner, restored. Even the Queen's ideas for her marriage did not offend England. The nation, indeed, wished her to marry Courtenay, Earl of Devon — the last representative of the Yorkists; but, urged by her cousin, the Papal Legate, Reginald Pole, and the Spanish Ambassador Renard, she refused this, and insisted on marrying Philip II of Spain. The idea of a Spanish match was unpopular, and there was discontent which ended in rebellion. *Sir Thomas Wyatt* collected a band of adherents, and he had the support of Suffolk (Jane Grey's father) and the friends of Northumberland. He collected a body of men and tried to

Mary's  
reign  
divisions

Catholic  
restora-  
tion

The  
bishops

The  
Spanish  
marriage  
(1554)

Wyatt's  
rebellion

seize the Queen. London, however, rose on her behalf, and Wyatt was captured and beheaded, together with Suffolk. Mary used this attempted revolt to rid herself of her unfortunate young cousin. Lady Jane Grey had been innocent of the plot, but she and her husband were now both beheaded. Even Princess Elizabeth was accused of being concerned, and was sent as a prisoner to the Tower, where she dreaded lest she herself was to be put to death. Mary dared not go so far, but she went on with the Spanish marriage, hoping she herself might have a child and so provide another heir to the throne besides Elizabeth.

Execution  
of Lady  
Jane  
Grey

This was the most threatening of all the dynastic marriages of the time. True, it nominally secured for England the alliance of the most powerful state in Europe. It might be regarded as a counterblow to the contemplated marriage between Mary Queen of Scots and the Dauphin. France and Spain were at the time the two great lords of Europe. Mary of Scotland was betrothed to France: then Mary of England would marry Spain — and Spain was a greater country than France. National vanity so far might be soothed in the glories of the Spanish match, but in truth there were innumerable dangers. Not only were both kingdoms in danger of being involved in the struggle between France and Spain; not only might an actual union of the French and Scottish thrones be menacing for England if Spanish troops were to be landed to protect us; far worse than either was the peril that England might be absorbed into the Spanish monarchy. She might lose independence, as the Netherlands were losing it, and become, as the Netherlands became, but a Spanish province — and with disastrous results. True, that in the marriage-treaty precautions had been taken: Mary alone was to manage English affairs and revenues; no foreigner was to hold command in army or fleet; England was not to be drawn into war with France through the match; if there was a son, he was to rule in England, Burgundy, and the Netherlands, but not in Spain. These were sane pre-

Dangers  
of the  
Spanish  
marriage

**Turning-point of the reign** cautions; but men take precautions against what they fear to be likely to happen; and treaties are not always kept. The son of such a match — of a half-Spanish mother and a Spanish father — would have every element of danger about him. As it happened, England was spared that son. Wyatt's battle-cry, "No Spanish match!" voices the popular dread; and he and his supporters were right.

**England again under Rome (1554)** This "Spanish match" is the turning-point in Mary's reign. With Spain at her back she set out on her scheme of restoring England to the Roman allegiance. The Papal Legate, Cardinal Pole, was permitted to land. Careful management of the elections produced a compliant Parliament, which repealed Henry VIII's ecclesiastical laws and begged that their sin of separating from Rome might be pardoned. Pole accepted the submission, withdrew the interdict, and England was again included in the Roman obedience. He yielded, indeed, something more: the old monastery lands were to be left to their present possessors. Everything could not be rubbed off the slate all at once.

**Persecution** The old heresy laws were now revived by Parliament, and there began the persecution of the Protestants. Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, Rogers, a canon of St. Paul's, Ferrar, Bishop of St. David's, and fourteen others were tried for heresy. Doubtless Mary and her advisers expected them — or most of them — to recant. Only *one* did so; the rest all went to the stake. This was the prelude. In May, 1555, it became clear that the Queen was not going to have the child she expected, and her disappointment may have quickened her zeal for Holy Church. Through the summer the persecution sharpened. In September, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley were tried together. Latimer and Ridley were burnt at Oxford. A delay was given to Cranmer; **Burning of Ridley and Latimer** burning an archbishop required special authority from Rome, and besides there were hopes that he might recant; but after making a submission he manfully withdrew it, and declared that he would die a Protestant, thrusting "that

**Burning of Cranmer (1556)**



unworthy hand " that had signed his submission first into the flames.

Cranmer was the last notable victim of the persecution; indeed, with the exception of about half a dozen Church dignitaries, there were no notable victims. No distinguished layman suffered for his faith — either the distinguished laymen, or the government, were too cautious. But there were some two hundred and seventy martyrs — little-known men — "some there be that have no memorial". Everyone knows Latimer's bold words to his brother bishop Ridley: "Play the man, Master Ridley; and we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out". The candle was lighted, doubtless. But it may be questioned if it was Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, and the greater martyrs who did most to light it. It is not easier for a bishop to be a martyr than for an ordinary poor man, but if need be, it will be expected of him to die for his faith as a soldier will die for his country: martyrdom at times becomes an episcopal privilege. Ordinary men are more shocked by the sufferings of the great, but more convinced by the heroism of their fellows. It was possible to doubt the reforming zeal of Henry VIII's day which was rewarded with Church lands, or the enthusiasm of Edward VI's reign, when the King and his ministers led the way, but there could be no doubt about Mary's Protestants who died the martyr's death for conscience' sake. Hitherto Protestantism had been somewhat suspect, as savouring of worldly gain, dubious motive, and wavering faith. Persecution there had been before in England. Henry IV and Henry V had burned the Lollards, and the reign of Henry VIII had seen men die for conscience' sake. More and Fisher were executed because they refused to swear the oath required by the Act of Supremacy. More, as a trained lawyer, had admitted that Parliament and King could fix the succession and he was prepared to accept Henry's settlement. But he would not swear an oath which

denied the Papal authority. Hence he died rather than act against his religious beliefs, and Fisher with him. But these two were isolated individuals, and though their deaths made a profound impression, yet they were not part of a great movement resisted by many. The determination which took simple folk to an agonizing death by fire, rather than give up their faith, made the Protestant cause.

Mary hoped by her persecution to convert England, and she did much to convert it — but it was to the other side.

Hatred of  
Mary

A sullen hatred rewarded her and Pole and Bonner and the Catholics, and above all Mary's Spanish husband Philip, who, it was assumed without much reason, had pushed Mary to persecute. Yet little could be done. A rebellion

The  
French  
war

would fail without help from abroad. If French troops came, Spanish troops would certainly come also, and the realm become a battle-ground. Anything was better than that. Besides, it was known that Mary was stricken with a mortal disease. To wait was best.

Yet short as the time left to Mary was, it was enough to bring one more humiliation — another result, men said, of the Spanish match; for friendship with Spain had meant war with France. England had nothing to gain from war, but France had, for Calais was still in English hands. On Calais, then, the French attack was directed, with every hope of success, for the garrison was small and the fortifications ruinous. Lord Wentworth, in command at Calais, knew what was preparing. He wrote urgently for men and money, but Mary would send neither. Every penny she could spare was spent on the pious task of restoring churches and refounding abbeys. In answer to Wentworth's letter of 29th December, that the French army was at hand, Mary replied that she had certain information that "no attack on Calais was intended". Before the letter reached him Wentworth had information even more certain, for 25,000 French were at the gates: with a garrison just able to oppose one man to every fifty of his assailants Wentworth held on

for five days, but not one man or ship was sent from England. On 6th January he surrendered. Lord Grey in the neighbouring fortress of Guisnes still hung on, but on 20th January he too had to yield.

The loss  
of Calais

So vanished the last English possession in France. At first valuable as giving a gate for English trade to the Continent, or as a point of attack on France, the use of Calais had long passed away. England's policy was changing to a new phase. She no longer sought a conquest of France; her eyes were beginning to turn over sea; and Spain was to be henceforth her national foe. But that was not seen at the time; Calais had been in English hands since 1347. It was the one fruit left of the harvest of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, the memorial of the Black Prince and Henry V; the nation's credit seemed to rest on its safe-keeping, and deep was the humiliation at its loss. Mary declared that when she died the word "Calais" would be found written on her heart.

Worn out by suffering, and heart-sick at the total failure of her plans, both for this country and for her personal happiness, Mary lingered on only a few months. She died leaving behind her a record of unrelieved disaster, and a memory as sad as her life itself. (*Note 47.*)

Death of  
Mary

## CHAPTER 31

### THE REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND

Before turning to Elizabeth's reign, it is perhaps advisable to consider what events had been passing in Scotland while England was thus slowly moving away from Roman Catholicism. For in Scotland a Reformation was achieved which was both peculiar in its character and of immense importance not only in the life of the Scottish nation, but also in its relations with England.

**Political importance of the Reformation in Scotland**

The first fact to be borne in mind about the Reformation in Scotland is this: it stopped the weak spot in England's defences, and this at a time of England's greatest danger. Scotland had always been an ally of France, and a Catholic Scotland would have been, in Elizabeth's reign, a base from which the Counter-Reformation could strike. A Reformed Scotland gave the enemy no opening for dealing a stab in the back.

Secondly, it led to the union of two relatively small powers into one big one. To the European diplomatist of the early sixteenth century England was a second-rate power, mostly following the lead of Spain; Scotland a hanger-on of France. Thanks to the Reformation in Scotland and to the statesmanship of Elizabeth, the two were united in one Protestant power of first-rate importance — a fact of incalculable consequence in Europe; and for the first time Britain reaped the full value of being an island.

Thirdly, Scotland gave the first example of a country making a successful Reformation in defiance of its rulers. It was the first "popular" reformation, as opposed to royal or political reformations.

**Union of Reformers not easily achieved**

These are great happenings; yet one is tempted at first to say they are inevitable. Each of the two countries has a Reformation at the same time; it is only natural that the Reformers join in self-defence. So far from this being inevitable, it was at first exceedingly unlikely. Not only were the two nations bitter foes, but they had everything to keep them apart; and their Reformations were totally different in character. Henry VIII would have treated the Scottish Reformers as rebels.

**Peculiarities of the Scottish Reformation**

In England the King had taken up the Reformation to suit himself, and shaped it to his own political purposes. The Scottish Reformation had in its beginning nothing to do with politics, nor could it be led by the King. James V relied upon his clergy, upon France, upon the Pope, for his nobles were already turning greedy eyes on the vast wealth of

the Church. To side with the Reformers meant to break with all of these ancient allies, and the King could not face that.

The Church in Scotland was rich, but much of the wealth was not used for Church purposes. The bishops were far more nobles than ecclesiastics — warlike, greedy for wealth, and worldly-minded. They were often the younger sons of great families, who used their position to plunder the Church for their own house. They fought among themselves — James Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, having ordered the Prior of St. Andrews to mend his immoral life, the Prior — who belonged to the wildest of all Lowland families, the Hepburns — retaliated by arming his retainers and threatening war on the archbishop. Incidents of this kind, involving clerical magnates, were by no means rare. The common clergy were poor, and ignorant, and ill-behaved; “dumb dogs” who did not preach — “drunken Sir John Latinless”, is Sir David Lindsay’s name for them. The exactions found so burdensome in England were even more oppressive in Scotland. The “corse presents” (mortuary fees), the taking of the “best cloth” and a cow from the family of the dead, pressed hardly on the poor. Marriage, too, in a small country where family relationship spread so widely, offered another point where the influence of the Church was oppressive. The prohibited degrees of cousinship came in so often that dispensations had perpetually to be obtained; and dispensations were not to be had without fees. Finally, the morals of the churchmen were openly and notoriously bad. In no country was the rule that the clergy must remain celibate more openly defied. Over and over again come the records of priests’ children being made legitimate, and no steps were taken to check the loose morality. Proposals for reform were made, orders issued, and so forth, but nothing was done.

Meanwhile the influence and writings of the German Reformers reached Scotland; translations of the Scriptures became common; Parliament and the Church tried to crush

The  
Church in  
Scotland  
(1500)

the new opinions, and in 1528 Patrick Hamilton, who had travelled in Germany and picked up the ideas of the time, was tried for heresy and burnt. "The reek of Mr. Patrick", however, did not deter others, and George Wishart, another who had learnt the new doctrines abroad, returned to Scotland in 1543, and began preaching, at first in Dundee, and after in Ayrshire. His quarrels with the clergy grew, and Cardinal Beaton had him arrested, tried, and put to death at St. Andrews. Three months later Wishart was revenged;

Murder of  
Cardinal  
Beaton

a gang of Beaton's enemies — Leslie, Melville, and the Kirkcaldys — slipped into the castle and stabbed him in his chair. His body was hung over the walls for the townsfolk to gaze at, just where, three months before, he had looked on at Wishart's execution. The murderers held out in the castle for more than a year. At length some French ships

May,  
1546

came to help the besiegers; then the "Castilians" surrendered, and were banished to the French galleys; with them went a man, after to be famous; a minister, "an earnest professor in Christ Jesus", a friend of Wishart, who had entered the castle during the Easter truce, and had been preacher to this band of godly murderers. This man was John Knox.

In 1547 Henry VIII died, and Somerset's policy was for a match between his young King and the child Mary Stuart; but, as has been seen, the battle of Pinkie shattered that hope. Mary was sent to France — England and Scotland being bitter enemies — and the Reform party in Scotland was checked. England was the only place whence the Reformers could get help, yet to ask for English help was to play the traitor. Edward VI, however, welcomed Scottish Protestants at his court, and procured the release of John Knox from the French galleys.

The accession of Mary Tudor gave another shift to the wheel; with England once more Catholic, the Reformers of the two countries, each party downtrodden and

Knox persecuted, began to draw together. Knox came back to

Scotland with some knowledge of Englishmen and their ways. After his release from the galleys in 1549 he had been Edward VI's chaplain, and had been offered a bishopric, prudently refusing it as he foresaw "evil days to come". The Roman Catholic Church in Scotland had failed to reform itself from within, but Knox found the time not yet ripe, and retired again. But the cause went on. Some powerful nobles — Glencairn, Argyll, Morton, and Erskine — united in a "band" to establish the "Word of God and his Congregation" against "wicked power that does intend tyranny". The people had shown by demonstrations that they as well as a strong party of nobles had declared for the Reformers; the Roman Church had to rely on the Crown and the French alliance. That, at any rate, seemed firm, for in April, 1558, Mary Queen of Scots married Francis, Dauphin of France.

## CHAPTER 32

### ELIZABETH (1558-1603)

When Mary Tudor died, in November, 1558, Elizabeth succeeded her sister, following the terms of Henry VIII's <sup>Accession of Elizabeth</sup> will — indeed, Mary, on her deathbed, recognized her as heir, and there was no dispute raised as to her succession.

#### I. RELIGIOUS SETTLEMENT

The first and most pressing problem to be faced was that of a religious settlement. The past thirty years had seen many changes. First Henry VIII's *political* Reformation, the overthrow of the Papal power in England but the leaving of doctrine practically unchanged; then under Edward VI an attempt at establishing a *reform in doctrine*. This had proved premature and unpopular. Then under Mary *reaction*, first to Henry VIII's system, and then back to

The  
question  
of religion



Roman Catholicism pure and simple. This last had also been exceedingly unpopular. Now the cautious wisdom of Elizabeth and her great minister Cecil devised a fresh system which proved enduring.

Elizabeth herself was bound to take the Protestant view. Elizabeth as Protestant leader No Roman Catholic would acknowledge that the marriage of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn was legal. Hence Elizabeth, if she were to keep the throne, must be herself Protestant, and England must deny Papal supremacy.

Certain conditions of the problem, however, had altered and so made Elizabeth's task easier. Elizabeth's advantages The Protestant party had grown stronger, and the Catholic weaker. The translation of the Bible, for one thing, had worked on the side of the Protestants, for though the Bible itself is on no side, yet the more the Bible was in men's hands, the more they inclined to judge in religious matters for themselves; and this habit of "private judgment", in place of accepting what is laid down by "authority", is the basis of Protestantism. Effect of Marian persecution Secondly, as has been shown, Mary's persecution had worked for the Protestant cause; it had made waverers see that the Protestants were really honest and in earnest. Thirdly, it was no longer possible to rest content with the system of Henry VIII: no country could continue to profess itself Catholic and yet be in flat defiance of the Pope. If Elizabeth's government was to endure it must have the support of either the Protestants or the Catholics. Finally, the Catholic cause had weakened, owing to the idea that it was a *foreign* cause. It was the cause of Philip of Spain; and Elizabeth's Catholic rival, Mary Queen of Scots, was the wife of a French prince. Hence the loyalty to Elizabeth grew more and more to be a Protestant loyalty; and as the Protestants were the loyal party, the Catholics tended to be thought the disloyal party—a charge which was sometimes quite unjustified, yet sometimes true, and always hard to rebut.

As the conclusion of the long drama of the Reformation

one seems to expect some great political stroke, some wide-reaching act that will settle the vexed question. There is, of course, nothing of the kind. The details of "the Elizabethan Settlement" are not striking. Compared with the fierce changes of the last reigns they seem moderate. As Pole was dead, the Archbishopric of Canterbury was vacant. It was given to Matthew Parker, a moderate Protestant. Elizabeth followed this by granting leave for the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Commandments to be said in English in the Church service, and for the gospel and epistle to be read from the English version. In 1559 Parliament met and drew up the Settlement. Briefly the details of it were:

1. The Repeal of the Act of 1554. Thus once more the Papal power in England was abolished, and Henry VIII's ecclesiastical legislation brought into force again.

Papal  
power  
abolished

2. An Act of Supremacy, declaring the Queen to be "supreme of all persons and causes ecclesiastical as well as civil".

Act of  
Supre-  
macy  
(1559)

3. An Act of Uniformity, accepting (in the main) Edward VI's Second Prayer Book; and laying down that vestments of the clergy and ornaments of the churches were to be as established by Parliament in the second year of Edward VI. The "Articles of Religion" of Edward VI, reduced from 42 to 39, were re-enacted.

Act of  
Uni-  
formity  
(1559)

The  
Prayer  
Book

It seems little on which to base a great Church settlement; not much that was remarkable, nothing that was exactly new. On the other hand it was conspicuously wise. The first Act was inevitable: England would never again accept the Papal power. But this blow once struck, everything was done to spare the wounded feelings of the Catholic party. The Act of Supremacy is far more cautious than Henry VIII's blunt declaration that he was "Head of the Church", and only office holders had to take the oath; the ordinary layman was left alone. The Prayer Book is the Prayer Book which we have to-day; and no word against Rome is in it. There was such a clause in Edward's Prayer Book, but

The  
"Middle  
Way"

Catholic  
bishops  
resigned  
sees

Mild  
penalties  
on  
Catholics

Elizabeth's advisers struck it out. Prayer is offered for the conversion of "Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics" — but not of Papists. The Communion service is so worded that those who believed in the Real Presence, and those who did not, could alike accept it. Alternative prayers for the sovereign, one more, the other less definitely Protestant, are provided. Men could do in many ways as seemed good to them and yet feel they were within the law. There was little severity threatened save to those who obstinately maintained the authority of the Pope; these were declared traitors. All except one of Mary's bishops and not a few of the clergy refused to take the oath of Supremacy, as was to be expected, and resigned their posts. Elizabeth was able to fill them with men of her own choice, and so had the heads of the Church thoroughly in sympathy with her. Even where Catholics refused to come to church and had the mass celebrated at home, the Government made no attempt to interfere save by imposing a shilling fine for not going to church. A man was permitted to compound for himself and his household at a rate of 20s. a month. The payment is not so trivial as it seems; to get the value of the money it must be multiplied by ten or so; and as the "Recusants" had also to pay their own priests, it was an expensive matter to be a Catholic. One after another of the county gentry, desiring to economize, found attendance at his parish church an easy way of doing it. One came in after another, and *time* above all things was on Elizabeth's side. She was able to give her system the chance to take root: under her a new generation grew up who had never seen England Roman Catholic and therefore accepted without question the Anglican Settlement. (Note 48.)

## 2. OUTLINES OF ELIZABETH'S FOREIGN POLICY

So far we have been concerned with one aspect only of Elizabeth's reign — her settlement of the Church, ending

the English Reformation: unquestionably important, yet in no way striking, nor even appearing at the time to be definitely final. Meantime her wise tolerance in religion, and the general good sense of her arrangements, gave them a firm hold. By 1570 Pius V, despairing of gentler measures, declared her excommunicate, and henceforth sterner means than persuasion were to be tried. Outlines

Yet long before 1570 — indeed from the beginning of the reign — there was in sight another means whereby England might again become Catholic. In European politics at the time there was still a firm belief in the state maxim, *Cujus regio ejus religio*. Where the sovereign was Catholic it was assumed the land would be Catholic; and in the main the assumption was true. No definite example had yet been seen of a land breaking away successfully from its ruler's creed. All the changes of the Reformation in England seemed to confirm the belief. Henry VIII's, Edward VI's, Mary's, and now Elizabeth's religious opinions had veered from one extreme to another, and England had veered with each. All that seemed to be needed to regain England from the Reformation was a Catholic sovereign on the throne. Catholic wish for Catholic sovereign

Various roads would lead to this end.

1. The next heir, Mary Queen of Scots, was a Catholic. If she were to succeed, all would, in the opinion of the Catholic leaders, be well again: more especially if after the death of her French husband she were to marry some English Catholic.

2. The throne might be won for Philip of Spain, the late Queen of England's husband, either by force or by marriage with Elizabeth. Possibly Philip might himself marry her, if the Papal dispensation were granted; or she might marry someone of the Habsburg house. In either case a Spanish Catholic ascendancy would be re-established in England. Danger from Spain

The forces against Elizabeth were enormously strong.

Spain and the Empire together then meant practically all Europe, except France and the Baltic states. Spain was reckoned to be extremely rich from her possessions in the New World, and her soldiers were at the time the best in Europe. Further, the abuses in the Papal court had been set right, the old grounds of complaint removed, and at the Council of Trent (1546-63) much had been done to win back the wavering allegiance of many who had leaned for the time to the Reformed doctrines. The Popes had once more become earnest and zealous, and the same spirit marked all the leaders of the Roman Church. The great Jesuit order had been formed to win back the heretics. Much had already been done by the powers of the Counter-Reformation in Germany, and their efforts were now concentrated on England. (*Note 49.*)

Against this attack the key of England's entrenched position was the throne. So long as Elizabeth lived, all was safe for the time: if her heir was a Catholic, there was peril in the future; if she had a Protestant heir, all was secure. At first the danger menaced from a Scottish Queen supported by the forces of the Catholic allies. After that Queen's death the danger took a fresh shape; it was open war with the Counter-Reformation and its champion, Spain; and its forces seemed greater than England was likely to be able to resist.

For the Catholic cause Elizabeth's timely death was, if not essential, at any rate much to be desired. To Protestant England her life was invaluable: her marriage to a Protestant most necessary, so that there might be a Protestant heir. Yet here comes one bewildering feature of the reign. Elizabeth would coquet, but she would not marry. And further, such proposals for marriage as seemed even moderately attractive to her, were not at all pleasing to the nation, for she repeatedly seemed to intend marriage with a French prince; and he would of course be a Catholic.

Here Elizabeth was wiser than the nation. She saw that

the best ally against Spain was France. France, though Catholic, was not of the Catholic Counter-Reformation party. She hated and feared Spain too much to join in that. She was Spain's great rival. Hence for Elizabeth to fish with the bait of a possible marriage was the best way to secure France: so long as Spain feared that she might make a French alliance, Spain would do nothing violent against her that might drive her into it. Once married, her value as a prospective catch would be gone. Thus by her coquettishness with French princes, Elizabeth kept Spain quiet and France on her side; this friendliness with France lasted all through her reign and proved her great support in acute difficulties; and in the end, of course, the Protestant heir came from Scotland.

Elizabeth's  
friendship  
with  
France

Elizabeth's reign, then, is one long struggle against the Counter-Reformation. It is convenient to treat it in four phases.

Struggle  
against  
counter-  
Reforma-  
tion

1. The Scottish phase (1558-68): this covers the first ten years of the reign, and ends with Mary Queen of Scots seeking shelter in England, thus putting herself in Elizabeth's power.

2. The period of Plots (1568-87): these all had the same object — to release Mary, to marry her to some Catholic, and to place her on the throne as Elizabeth's successor. As no successor would be required till Elizabeth was dead, most of the plots included Elizabeth's assassination. The plots ended with the execution of Mary (1587). This left nothing to plot about.

3. The Armada (1588): the forces of the Counter-Reformation tried at last open war, and failed.

4. The last days of Elizabeth (1589-1603): this saw the war with Spain carried to a successful issue, especially at sea: and with it may be grouped an account of the new maritime spirit, the exploits of the free-booters, and the early attempts at colonization — though some of these belong in date to an earlier period.

## 3. SCOTLAND AND ELIZABETH

**Mary Stuart's claim to the English throne** The Scottish problem which Elizabeth had to face was very complicated. Mary Stuart was, in the first place, a claimant to the throne of England.<sup>1</sup> She was a Catholic and supported by the Catholic powers. She also stood for the ancient alliance between France and Scotland, which had always been a threat to England. Six months before Elizabeth's succession, Mary had been married to the Dauphin of France. She had assigned to her husband, in the event of her death without issue, the throne of Scotland and her claims on England. Now at length it appeared certain that Scotland and France, so long allied, would be definitely united.

**The Franco-Scottish alliance** On the other hand, little as Elizabeth liked the prospect of allying with subjects against their ruler — for, all her life, she stoutly supported the power of a sovereign — yet Mary's rebellious subjects were Elizabeth's best allies. The Protestants of Scotland were strongly opposed to the French alliance, and they were actively hostile to the French Regent. **Reformers opposition to Mary of Guise** Mary Stuart herself was, of course, in France with her husband, and her mother, Mary of Guise, was keeping down with difficulty, the Reforming party headed by the "Lords of the Congregation", as Glencairn and the other Protestant nobles styled themselves. If Elizabeth was to secure Scotland she must support the Reformers; yet to do so was obnoxious, for two strong reasons. It would offend France, and she could not afford to quarrel with France as well as Spain; besides, she detested helping rebels, and it would be a dangerous precedent: it would be only too painfully easy for France to help rebels in England against her. **Reformers led by Knox** And further, Knox, in the fullness of his zeal, had just issued

<sup>1</sup> Mary was the sole heiress of Margaret Tudor, elder sister of Henry VIII. Failing Elizabeth, she was the heir to the English throne according to primogeniture. Henry's will had left the succession not to the heirs of his elder sister, but to those of his younger sister, Mary (namely, the Greys). This arrangement, however, was not popularly accepted, and Mary Stuart was considered the heir.



his famous *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. It was directed against the three Maries,<sup>1</sup> all Catholics, and all, to Knox's mind, abominable. That the fate of England and Scotland should hang at this critical time upon a succession of queens, all marriageable, and all therefore potentially dangerous, in so much that their marriages might entangle their realms in all kinds of calamities, has always been a fact dwelt on by historians as most singular; and it moved Knox — an outspoken man — to more than his usual plainness of language. It was peculiarly unlucky that the *Blast*, intended to wither the Catholic Mary Tudor, should deafen her Protestant sister on her accession. It gave Elizabeth great offence, and she refused to let Knox pass through England, and would have nothing to do with him.

No two years contain so many events as 1559 and 1560. Knox came back to Scotland, and put heart into the Reformers. "The voice of that one man is able in an hour to put more life into us than six hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears," said one who knew him. His supreme quality was his fearlessness; the words spoken by Morton at his grave tell the naked truth: "Here lies one who never feared the face of man". Already the preachers and the Lords of the Congregation were at odds with the regent. A conference was invited at Perth, and both factions gathered; each suspected the other of treachery. On 11th May Knox preached a sermon against idolatry, and the mob suited the action to the words by attacking and destroying the monasteries and religious houses in the city. The spirit of destruction, which must be regretted, spread to St. Andrews, Stirling, Dundee, Edinburgh, and over the country. "Burn the nests," cried Knox, "and the rooks will fly." Soon the Lords of the Congregation were in arms, and masters of Edinburgh. Most of the nobility had joined them; the

The  
sermon  
at  
Perth

Rebellion  
against  
the  
Regent

<sup>1</sup> Mary Tudor, Mary Stuart, and Mary of Guise. Knox uses the word *Regiment* to mean Rule or Government.

( F 938 )

Second Prayer Book of Edward VI was appointed for use in the churches, and the property of the plundered abbeys was to be "bestowed upon the faithful ministers". Needless to say, they did not get it; the great nobles intercepted most of it.

Faced with this rebellion, the regent looked for help to France. Here, too, momentous events had occurred; peace had been made between France and Spain at Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) — an ill omen for Elizabeth, whose interest lay in their mutual enmity — and then, in the tournament held to celebrate the treaty, Henry II met with a fatal accident, so that Francis, Mary's husband, now became King of France. In July a French expedition to Scotland was preparing, and the Reformers appealed to Elizabeth. She refused to help, though she secretly sent some money.<sup>1</sup> For the time she waited to see how it would fare between the Lords of the Congregation and the regent, backed by the French. The French held Leith, and the Reformers could not dislodge them. An assault was beaten off, and the French occupied Stirling. The cause of Reform was almost lost when Elizabeth at last acted. She sent a squadron of ships under Wynter to the Firth of Forth; so secretly had she acted that no one knew at first in whose cause they came; but the action was decisive; to blockade Leith meant that the French would receive no more reinforcements (December, 1559).

The credit of winning Elizabeth to this momentous step was due in the main to Maitland of Lethington. It was probably he who had persuaded the Reformers to drop the cry of "Religion" and unite on the more patriotic demand for the expulsion of the French and the regent. He went as envoy to confer with Elizabeth in November. Lethington was a statesman far in advance of his time. "The mark I always shoot at," he wrote, "is the union of England and Scotland in perpetual friendship." The first proof of his marksmanship was the sailing of Wynter's fleet. It was fol-

<sup>1</sup> Bothwell robbed the messenger who carried it.

lowed by a treaty between Elizabeth and the Lords of the Congregation against Mary of Guise in February; an English army entered Scotland in April. Leith was besieged by English and Scots fighting side by side. In June the regent died. A month later the French surrendered, and were removed from Scotland; and the English departed too, leaving behind them, for the first time in the history of the two nations, gratitude instead of hatred. No advantage had been sought; not a word had been said of the old obnoxious claim of suzerainty. Elizabeth had played fair, when fairness was masterly, and had won. The Reformation in Scotland was safe (though this was not what she had played for), and she was safe too in having a Protestant Scotland over her borders. And here fortune came in to aid her. In December, 1560, Francis II died; and Mary Stuart was no longer wife of the King of France; she was but a childless widow, Queen of Scots.

Success  
of English  
and Re-  
formers

Treaty of  
Leith  
(July,  
1560)

Her kingdom, however, had been changed by momentous actions taken in that very year. In August, 1560, a Scottish Parliament sanctioned the establishment of the Reformed Church. Papal authority was abolished, the Protestant faith alone was recognized, the exercise of the mass and of Roman Catholic rites in general was forbidden under heavy penalties.

Re-  
formed  
Church  
estab-  
lished

In August, 1561, Mary came home to her realm — and to her ruin. "Was never seen a more dolorous face of the heaven . . . that forewarning God gave unto us," said Knox. It is hard to realize the pathetic tragedy of Mary's return. She was only nineteen; she had hitherto lived a happy life in a highly-civilized country, first as a princess, then as Queen of France. Suddenly her husband had died, and she, childless, had to leave France and return to Scotland — a bewildering change. Scotland, in comfort, civilization, and manners, was far behind France. If one wants an example one has only to think of the Château of Amboise and the Towers of Holyroodhouse, the one light, graceful, looking out over smiling river and countryside, perhaps the

Return  
of Mary  
Stuart to  
Scotland

Her  
opponents

most charming "great house" in a land always supreme in great houses, the other low-lying and squat, dark and gloomy, with slits for windows carved in the great depths of walls which must always have suggested a dungeon rather than a palace. At her homecoming Mary received a warm and enthusiastic welcome from her subjects, rejoiced to have their Queen of the ancient royal house of Stuart back to reign over them. But cordial relations could not long endure between a sincerely Catholic Queen, who loved France first and Scotland only second, and a sternly Protestant people and nobility. Mary's first mass at Holyroodhouse was, though private, interrupted by brawlers clamouring at the door to put the priest to death. Knox, in his first interview with her, called her Church by a foul name. On her entering Edinburgh she was presented with a huge Bible — a fairly plain hint — and a number of children were set up to make a speech to her "concerning the putting away of the mass". In fact, every preacher of the Reformed doctrines in Scotland thought it his duty to check and exhort his Queen. The nobles were hardly better. Bothwell (probably) was plotting to murder her in her first year. Even Huntly, the chief of the Catholics, intrigued with the Hamiltons, and compelled the Queen to fight against him till his death after a skirmish with the royal troops. There were few who offered Mary faithful service.

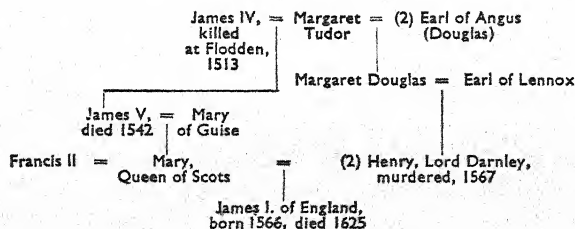
Yet she was not powerless. She had her beauty and her astuteness. "If there be not in her a crafty wit," says Knox, "my judgment faileth me." Further, she was heir to the English throne, though Elizabeth would not recognize her title. Finally, she had another weapon: she could marry again.

Mary's  
marriage

It was recognized that inevitably she would do so, and all the politicians in England, Scotland, and on the Continent occupied themselves with matchmaking. There were rumours of everything — she would marry the King of Denmark or of Sweden; a son of the Emperor; Don Carlos;

a French prince; even Philip II himself. Elizabeth pressed the choice of her own favourite noble, the Earl of Leicester. <sup>Elizabeth's wishes</sup> Mary pretended to consider this, but secretly made her own choice; and her choice fell on her cousin Henry, Lord Darnley.

One thing was to be said for this match; it did not entangle Scotland with either France or Spain; perhaps it may have commended itself to Elizabeth in this way, for though she opposed it she did not try to prevent it, as she might have done. She let Darnley go from England to Scotland. Yet it had dangers too, for Darnley was of Tudor blood, and thus the marriage joined two Tudor lines of claim to the English throne. Both Mary and Darnley were grandchildren of Margaret Tudor (Henry VIII's sister), who had married James IV. Thus, "if anything should happen to Elizabeth" — which, being translated by plotters, signified "were she assassinated" — Mary and Darnley's joint claim to the throne would be almost irresistible; and this would mean a Catholic on the throne of England. <sup>The Darnley marriage</sup>



Again, however, Elizabeth's troubles were smoothed out by the misfortunes of her rivals. Mary soon quarrelled with Darnley. He was vicious and empty-headed, and she got no help from him. She refused him the crown-matrimonial, and he was much offended by her refusal. So he allied himself with some of the Protestant nobles, who joined him in a plot. The murder of Mary's Italian secretary, Rizzio, <sup>Plots</sup> was to be the first item; how much further the plotters

were to go none knows; probably the seizing of Mary and the crown for Darnley lay at the back of it. Mary had only Bothwell and the new Earl of Huntly faithful to her; against her many: the Douglas brood, Ruthven and Morton; nobles full of hate for an Italian upstart; Lethington, now left in the cold and jealous; Lennox, angered that his son was slighted over the crown; and her despicable husband screwing his courage up with much liquor. The conspirators signed an agreement<sup>1</sup> to support Darnley; he was to secure them against the consequences "for whatsoever crime", and they were to have their religion established "conform to Christ's Book".

Murder of Rizzio at Holyrood-house (1566) On the evening of 12th March Darnley came into Mary's room at Holyroodhouse; behind, Ruthven, Morton, and other plotters; Rizzio clung pitifully to Mary's skirt. There was a scuffle in which the supper-table fell, and Rizzio was dragged out, and dispatched by many stabs; the body was thrown down the stairs, Darnley's dagger, which had been used by George Douglas, sticking in it.

Murder of Darnley at Kirk-o'-Field (1567) No political murder is more stamped with horror, nothing is more amazing than the skill with which Mary got the better of the murderers. In two days she had won over Darnley, had spoken of amnesty, and had persuaded him to escape with her to Dunbar. Her friends joined her; Bothwell brought in men, and the murderers scattered to seek safety. Mary's son was born in June, and all the summer she was talking of reconciliation; but she had not forgotten. In October another agreement was signed by very much the same set of plotters, this time against Darnley, though nothing was specified. In January, 1567, he fell ill of small-pox at Glasgow. When he was recovering, Mary visited him and brought him back with her to the Kirk-o'-Field, an old monastic house then just outside Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> Here she visited him, going there for the last time on 9th February;

<sup>1</sup> The plot was very widely known. Randolph, the English envoy, reported it to Cecil three days before the murder.

<sup>2</sup> The site is now occupied by the University buildings.



while she was sitting with him upstairs, Bothwell and some helpers were carrying in gunpowder into the room beneath Darnley's. Bothwell then fetched the Queen, rode back with her to a masque at Holyroodhouse, and later rode down again to Kirk-o'-Field. About 2 on the morning of 10th February Kirk-o'-Field was blown into the air. The bodies of Darnley and his page were found in the garden with no marks of powder on them. They had been strangled.

Bothwell's guilt is certain. How much Mary knew of the plot has remained one of the puzzles of history. No one at the time doubted that she knew, and the whole train of events makes it hard to doubt now. But too many were in the plot to have it dragged into day. An inquiry was made and abandoned; Bothwell was "cleansed". Then came another thunderstroke. Late in April Mary was seized by Bothwell, no doubt with her consent, and carried off to Dunbar; Bothwell secured a hasty divorce from his wife; in a fortnight Mary and Bothwell re-entered Edinburgh together; on 15th May they were married. The marriage shocked the whole world. The Pope and Philip of Spain were aghast. In Edinburgh itself placards appeared which openly named Bothwell as Darnley's murderer.

Marriage  
of Mary  
and Both-  
well

The next event was the gathering of the Lords of the North against Bothwell. The forces met at Carberry Hill, close to Pinkie; Bothwell's men deserted, and he escaped; but Mary was captured, brought into Edinburgh in her short red skirt, jeered at by the mob, and at last sent off to her prison on the island in Lochleven. Immediately after, a silver casket holding the famous "Casket Letters" was captured from a retainer of Bothwell's who had been sent to remove some of Bothwell's property from Edinburgh Castle. These letters were from Mary to Bothwell, written before the murder of Darnley. They were not only "love-letters" but gave details as to how Mary would induce her husband to come to Kirk-o'-Field, and left no doubt as to what might happen to him there. If genuine, they would

Rising  
against  
Mary



prove that Mary was privy to Darnley's murder and had consented to Bothwell's abduction of her. They were, therefore, the very piece of evidence which her enemies lacked to justify her imprisonment without involving their own guilt. It is certainly suspicious that they secured it so very promptly; and there is much else to indicate that some parts of the letters were forged and tampered with.<sup>1</sup>

When Mary was in prison Elizabeth began to bestir herself a little on her behalf. She wrote to forbid the Lords to do her any injury, and to suggest that the little Prince James, her son, should be sent to England. There was talk of putting Mary to trial for her life, but in the end it was arranged that she should abdicate in favour of her son, and that her half-brother, Moray, should be regent. She entrusted to him her jewels; he sold some to Elizabeth.

Robbed of her jewels, her son, her throne, her liberty, Mary still had her beauty; she won over her gaoler, George Douglas; the keys of Lochleven Castle were stolen, and Mary rode off wildly to join her last friends, the Hamiltons. Moray gathered the Protestant Lords, and routed Mary and the Hamiltons at *Langside*. Her last hope in Scotland gone, Mary fled in haste to the Solway, and two days after the battle crossed into England.

Mary's  
flight to  
England  
(1568)

Mary expected that either Elizabeth would help her, or that she would let her pass from England to seek aid in France or elsewhere. But Elizabeth could hardly let her go to France to bring in French help against her subjects. Nor could she easily force the Scots to accept her again as their sovereign, though she denied that the Scottish lords had any right to depose her.

A Commission was appointed, consisting of representatives of the Scottish lords, of the chief English Catholic nobility, and of English Protestant lords, to inquire into the whole case. Mary at first sent advocates to present her cause, but later withdrew and the Commission broke up.

Com-  
mission  
of inquiry

<sup>1</sup> See footnote on next page.

Mary remained in England. Elizabeth, after the admission by the Commission of the "Casket Letters" as evidence,<sup>1</sup> refused to receive her at Court. She was sent to Bolton in Yorkshire, where, though free to receive friends and even to make journeys to Buxton, she was under the control of a supervisor, and was really a prisoner. (*Note 50.*)

Mary  
retained  
in  
England

#### 4. THE PERIOD OF PLOTS (1568-1587)

So passed away the immediate peril of a hostile queen in Scotland who was a Catholic, marriageable, exceedingly attractive, and heir to Elizabeth's throne. Mary was a prisoner, and the Reformation, established by the Scottish Parliament in 1560, was safe: that gateway of attack was blocked to France or Spain. This meant much in the way of security. But in the ten years from 1558 to 1568 other things had happened to help Elizabeth. Not only was she stronger, but her enemies had grown weaker. The wars of religion had burst out in France. At the head of the extreme Catholic party there was the house of Guise, and the Guises set up a claim to the throne. As a safeguard against the Guises the kings of France sought Elizabeth's friendship, and this friendship was maintained; it survived even the shock of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. One prop to the alliance Elizabeth furnished by her marriage policy; she "considered" a proposal to marry a French royal prince, first Anjou, and later, his younger brother Alençon. True, she was not in earnest; privately she alluded to her suggested bridegroom as her "Frog"; but an appearance of negotiation was kept up. So France, severed from Scotland, distracted by religious wars and by the ambitions of the Guises, who in their turn were backed by Spain, was perforce friendly to Elizabeth. (*Note 54.*)

Eliza-  
beth's  
improved  
position

Proposed  
French  
marriage

One thread indeed runs through all Elizabeth's tangled

<sup>1</sup> The originals were lost. The Commissioners accepted them as evidence, but the truth as to their genuineness has never been decided.

Elizabeth's  
policy as  
regards  
France

foreign policy. She and France each needed support against Spain, and therefore both remained friendly, and each tried to secure a firm alliance, to serve their own ends. Thus, to look ahead a little, when later on, in 1584, Henry III, the last of the Valois, was assassinated, Elizabeth's policy became even more definite. She helped the Protestant heir, Henry of Navarre, with as much money as she could spare (£35,000), when he first claimed the throne, and in the war which followed between him and the Catholics of France, she sent him over £300,000. She and Henry were clearly allies, for both had Spain as their open enemy.

One other motive impelled her to cultivate French friendship. She wished to sever the traditional alliance between France and Scotland, and in this she succeeded. France gave Mary Stuart no support throughout her reign, but instead remained on good terms with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth  
and the  
Nether-  
lands

While France grew weak through the bitter wars of religion, Spain, too, was less strong, on account of a religious struggle. The Netherlands, her richest province, was largely Protestant and anti-Spanish. Besides religious strife, the provinces objected to Philip's financial policy, and in 1568 rebellion broke out against his rule. Throughout Elizabeth's reign the struggle went on, and clearly it was to Elizabeth's interest to help the Dutch. At first she dared not do so openly, for she was too weak to risk war with Spain. So she contented herself with sending money, as much as she could spare, though less than the Dutch wanted. Actually, in a period of ten years, she sent William the Silent half a million pounds, a large sum for those days. She helped indirectly too, when she detained the ships carrying the money to pay Alva's troops, and on a pretext kept it for herself. Finally, after the assassination of William the Silent, she sent an expedition (1585), which, however, failed to achieve anything under the incompetent leadership of Leicester. Indeed, the expedition was only memorable for the chivalry shown by Sir Philip Sidney at the battle of Zutphen (1585)

when the English were defeated by the Spaniards. But in all she did, Elizabeth was hampered by her wish not to come to open war if she could avoid it, and, in addition, she had to deal with treachery at home. (*Note 53.*)

These years saw a succession of plots aimed at Elizabeth and engineered from abroad, but using her own subjects against her. Plots in England

What was coming was foreshadowed at that inquiry held over Mary in 1569. Norfolk, Elizabeth's chief commissioner, was at first convinced of Mary's guilt. Then he changed his mind, and began to scheme to marry Mary. As he was the chief English Catholic, such a marriage would have pleased the Catholic party. It might even have produced a Catholic heir to the throne, for nothing was yet settled about the succession. But Elizabeth's ministers were vigilant, and well served by their spies. The plan was revealed; the inquiry was closed; and Mary was sent off, half-guest, half-prisoner, to Tutbury.

The next step was more formidable. Norfolk and his friends intrigued with the Duke of Alva, the Spanish commander in the Netherlands. They promised to head a rising and arrest Cecil, Elizabeth's chief minister; Alva was to furnish troops; Mary was to be released. Alva refused to send his men before the rebels showed themselves to be in earnest, and Elizabeth's ministers were again too quick and too well-informed. Orders were given to arrest the most dangerous plotters, the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland. How dangerous these two were their names bear witness. Percy and Neville were the two great fighting names in the north; and the north was still used to arms, and warlike. The earls called out their border forces, seized Durham, and had the mass sung in its cathedral; then hurried southward to capture Mary. But Mary was taken to Coventry, and the Queen's forces barred the earls' march in the West Riding. There was no fighting; the leaders escaped to Scotland; the rebels scattered; many were The Rising in the North (1569)

caught and hanged in the towns and villages of Durham and Yorkshire; there was need of a sharp lesson. So ended the Rising in the North. It is worth note that while the earls wished their cause to appear to be the Catholic cause, and made show that they were fighting for their faith, Elizabeth took pains to display them as merely rebels. As if expressly to destroy their claim to be the Catholic party in arms for the Catholic cause, she sent against them a Catholic as commander, the Earl of Sussex.

Up till now, indeed, it was not clear that in the end Elizabeth might not return to the Church of Rome. The  
 The  
 excom-  
 munica-  
 tion  
 "English heresy", as it was regarded by the Catholic party, had lasted long, but they trusted that it would be overcome in time; it was hardly conceivable that Elizabeth would persist in a cause that seemed to sever her from all other European monarchs. Consequently the Papacy had been long-suffering, affording her leisure for repentance. Now, however, it seemed time to remind her that her attitude could no longer be tolerated, and in 1570 Pius V declared her excommunicate, and her subjects released from the duty of obeying her. This, it is true, need not mean a final breach—excommunication could be revoked—but it made it clear that Rome regarded her for the time as an enemy, and expected Catholics who were true to their faith to take part against her.

Hence came a fresh outburst of plots, both from at home and abroad.

A few fervent Catholics in England, and enthusiasts in Spain, France, and Italy, all began to see that to dethrone Elizabeth was their duty. First came the Ridolfi plot (1571).  
 Ridolfi's  
 plot  
 (1571)  
 This Ridolfi, a Florentine banker, was in the confidence of the Pope, and employed as an agent between Norfolk, Mary Queen of Scots, and Philip of Spain. Alva was asked to send help from the Netherlands; he, however, answered, with caution, that he was doubtful of success unless Elizabeth should first die a natural death, "or any other death".

Eventually the plot leaked out through Burleigh's spies; Norfolk was arrested, and put to death.

A brief period of comparative calm followed. By the Treaty of Blois, France had agreed not to support Mary's cause in Scotland, and Elizabeth and the French Court managed to keep friends in spite of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (Aug., 1572). The rebels in the Netherlands proved stubborn and kept Spain occupied; and even when Don John had nearly subdued them, and was planning to invade England and marry Mary himself, Philip was so much alarmed at his half-brother's ambitious plans that he recalled him.

The next trouble came from the Jesuits. Since its foundation, in 1540, by Ignatius Loyola, this order had produced the leaders in the struggle to win back the peoples that had adopted the teaching of the Reformation. In 1568 a school for English Jesuits was set up at Douai — moved ten years later to Rheims — on purpose to train a band of missionaries to reconvert England. Such persons came to England at the risk of their lives: one, Cuthbert Mayne, was executed in 1577. A fresh campaign began in 1580, with the arrival of **Campion and Parsons**. Nominally they did not meddle in questions of state, but their teaching had a marvellous influence in reviving Catholic hopes throughout England, and the Government caused **Campion** and several of his companions to be arrested, tried for treasonable plotting, and executed. There was little evidence against **Campion** who indeed died praying for "Elizabeth, your Queen and mine, to whom I wish a long quiet reign and all prosperity." His comrade, **Parsons**, who escaped, showed by his subsequent career that he certainly did meddle in questions of state. He sent two Jesuit companions into Scotland to stir up a rising in Mary's cause; he plotted with Mendoza, the Spanish envoy in London; he conspired with Philip and the Pope, and planned Elizabeth's murder. But the English assassin, who was to kill the Queen

The  
Jesuits:  
the  
Catholic  
Mission

Campion  
and  
Parsons

for a reward of 100,000 francs, was, as Parsons regretted, "a worthless fellow, who would do nothing". Parsons was also in the plot for a Spanish invasion, which was got up by Mendoza and a Cheshire gentleman named Francis Throckmorton. Again Burleigh and Walsingham were well-informed; Throckmorton was arrested (December, 1583) and executed, and Mendoza dismissed.

Throck-  
morton's  
plot  
(1583)

So far Elizabeth had seemed to bear a charmed life; the great bulk of her people were enthusiastically loyal; the plotters half-hearted and inefficient. But in 1584 came a thunderstroke of politics — so-called — to show that plots did not always miscarry. William the Silent, Prince of Orange, the heart and centre of the rebellion in the Netherlands, was shot by an assassin in Spanish pay,<sup>1</sup> Balthasar Gérard. Just at the same time Anjou's death made it clear that the crown of France would go, after Henry III's death, to Henry of Navarre, who was a Protestant. The prospect of being ruled by a heretic was, to many French Catholics, unbearable; and forthwith civil war broke out in France. This was disastrous for Elizabeth. Not only would she get no help from France, if she needed it, against a Spanish invasion — now far more probable since William of Orange was gone, and the Spanish troops under Parma were triumphant in the Netherlands — but, what was worse, the Catholic party in France, alarmed at the prospect of a Huguenot on the throne, were inviting help from Spain. If, as seemed likely, France and Spain were to unite in a Catholic league, Elizabeth and the cause of England would be lost.

Assas-  
sination  
of William  
of Orange  
(1584)

England made what reply she could. Twelve years before, Parliament had petitioned for Mary's attainder, but Elizabeth would not permit it. In the peril of 1584 an Association was formed, the members of which undertook to prosecute to the death anyone plotting the Queen's death,

The  
Associa-  
tion

<sup>1</sup> Parma had *promised* him pay. He was, however, penniless; a gift from William himself, in reward for a piece of news, provided the money to buy the pistols.



and also *any person in whose favour such an attempt was made*. Parliament followed this up with an Act which provided that if such a plot were formed with the "privity" of any person pretending a title to the throne, that person could be tried for treason by royal commission. This might not secure Elizabeth from the assassin, but, if she died, Mary would never succeed to the throne. Her life would be forfeit, in any case. Elizabeth followed this up by an alliance with James VI for mutual defence of their religion.

Alliance  
with  
James VI  
of  
Scotland

So affairs stood at the beginning of the year 1586. In May Walsingham intercepted a letter from Mary to Mendoza, in which she disinherited her son James and made over all her claims to Philip of Spain. This, however, was only the beginning. Another plot was brewing. Savage, an English officer serving with Parma, took an oath that he would murder Elizabeth. Mendoza, now ambassador in France, suggested that Cecil and Walsingham had better be killed also. The English agent for the plot was Antony Babington, a Catholic attached to Elizabeth's court, who found five other assassins to join Savage. Walsingham's chief spy, however, had wormed himself into the secret. The letters between Mary and the plotters were intercepted, deciphered, copied, and forwarded, and so the plot grew under Walsingham's fingers. The object was to be sure of Mary's "privity" to the scheme to murder; that once established, nothing could save her. At last, in July, she wrote: "*Affairs being thus prepared, then shall it be time to set the six gentlemen at work*". That was enough. Mary's papers were seized, and she was tried before commissioners at Fotheringay.

Babington's  
plot  
(1586)

Mary  
implicated

Inevitably she was found guilty; Parliament petitioned for her immediate execution. Elizabeth hesitated; to put Mary to death was to change the whole face of politics, to embark on all kinds of new dangers. But Parliament and the Privy Council were determined on Mary's death, and the warrant for her execution was sent by the Privy Council to Fotheringay; and in February, 1587, Mary was beheaded.

Mary's  
execution  
(1587)

So ended the period of plots with the death of the unhappy woman in whose favour they were made. If Spain was to do anything now, it must be by invasion; the enemy who had fought behind the covert of secrecy and conspiracy must now come into the open.

## 5. THE ARMADA

Since the days of Henry VII a spirit of adventure had sent Englishmen, particularly from the western ports of Plymouth, Bideford, and Bristol, out into the great waters. To explore, to find gold, to trade, and, it may be added, to plunder, were the objects. *Chancellor* went to Archangel; *Willoughby* to the North-east Passage, and to his death, in 1554; *Frobisher* to Labrador; *Davis* to the North-west Arctic. Such northern adventures were all attempts to find an English route to the East; the existing roads round the Cape of Good Hope or the Horn were already seized on; they belonged to Portugal and to Spain. The North proved unkindly and inaccessible, however, and there were no inhabitants to buy the cloth which the Englishmen hoped to sell in cold latitudes. Hence the diversion to the warmer latitudes, in particular to the Spanish Main. Spain resented the coming of English ships, and all our trading there had a suspicion of contraband about it, and even a taste of piracy now and again. But the maxim ran, "No peace beyond the line",<sup>1</sup> and though there was often fighting in the Spanish Main, at home Spain, though sorely tried, had kept up a sort of peace with England. The provocation she swallowed was amazing. In a sense she began the violence in the treacherous attack on *Sir John Hawkins's* flotilla at San Juan in 1568; but Hawkins had no business there, and was meaning to force a sale of the slaves he was carrying. He lost four ships — one of them belonging to the Queen — and goods to the value of £100,000; and he and his com-

<sup>1</sup> The line drawn by Pope Alexander VI, 300 miles west of the Azores, to separate the colonial spheres of Portugal (east) and Spain (west).

panion, *Francis Drake*, barely escaping with their lives, *Drake* came back angry and revengeful. In 1572 came Drake's attack on Nombre de Dios, his capture of the mule-train loaded with silver, and his first vision of the Pacific. In 1577 he sailed with five ships, the chief being the *Golden Hind*, through the Strait of Magellan, fell on the unprotected Spanish towns on the Pacific coast, plundered them, and then crossed the ocean to Java, and so home round the world, bringing back treasure valued at £800,000. For this exploit the Queen knighted him on board the *Golden Hind* at Deptford; so substantial a contribution as £800,000 to what may be called the party funds deserved a knighthood. Even so, though Spain remonstrated angrily, no war followed. Each country laid an embargo on the other's vessels in 1585, and the Queen sent Drake off again to plunder the Spanish West Indies. Yet even now only two royal ships went; it was a sort of joint-stock piracy; the rest were merchantmen from London and the West and private venturers, some thirty in all. This flotilla pillaged the Spanish islands, sacked Santiago in the Cape Verde, Domingo, and Carthagena, plundering, burning, and holding to ransom, and returned unscathed. The profit was poor,<sup>1</sup> but the damage done enormous. (*Note 57.*)

This raid on the West Indies decided Philip at last. His generals in the Netherlands urged an invasion of England as easy; Spain could collect a huge fleet; and, finally, *Effect of Mary's death* Mary's death, in 1587, made it clear that if the enterprise succeeded it was Philip in person who would profit by it. Mary, by her will, had "bequeathed" her domain and her claim to the English throne to Philip, who thus regarded himself as her heir. So the preparations, hitherto lukewarm, *Drake's expedition to Cadiz* were pressed forward, and the Armada would have sailed in 1587, had not Drake's "singeing of the King of Spain's beard" — his attack on the shipping in Cadiz harbour — thrown everything back for a year. Thirty-seven ships and

<sup>1</sup> About £50,000.

quantities of stores were destroyed, and Drake, after threatening Lisbon, hovered off Cape St. Vincent for six weeks, snapping up Spanish coasters and preventing any movement of ships from the Mediterranean ports. This daring exploit increased the Spanish terror of the terrible "El Draque", but it also displays how excellent was his strategy. He petitioned to be allowed to repeat his attack in 1588, but Elizabeth refused, fearing that the Spanish fleet might elude him and find the Channel bare.

So the Armada, the great enterprise against the heretic, officially blessed by Pope and clergy, with its motto from the Psalms,<sup>1</sup> sailed out of Lisbon on 20th May, 1588: 130 ships, with 8000 seamen and 19,000 soldiers — a great fleet.

We must note that it was not intended as a "battle fleet", but was simply to act as transport for the army of invasion. It was to sail up Channel without seeking the English fleet, seize Margate, join Parma, who was to provide 30,000 picked Spanish troops from the Netherlands, and convey him over. The Armada made shocking weather to Corunna, taking nineteen days over it, and put in there to refit, stop leaks, and replace some of the rotting stores which the Spanish contractors had furnished. It did not leave Corunna till 12th July, and now, more or less favoured by weather, appeared off the Lizard on 19th July. The Channel fleet, under Lord Howard of Effingham, with Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, Fenner, and Raymond, had just put back into Plymouth to get supplies, and was windbound there. The ships were warped out into the Sound and got to sea, but the Spanish fleet passed farther to the southward. Thus the Armada, in spite of all its tardiness, had got into the Channel, and the way was clear; there was no enemy in front except the tiny squadron under Seymour and Wynter, helping the Dutch to watch Parma in the narrow seas.

If the total of ships be counted, the English were more

<sup>1</sup> "Exsurge Deus et vindica causam tuam" (Ps. xxxv. 23).

than the Spanish; they numbered 197, but only 49 were over 200 tons. The total tonnage of the Spaniards was nearly double that of the English. The Spaniards had nearly double the number of men, but a large proportion were soldiers, not seamen. Yet it was not a fight which was to be settled by size or number. The Spaniards were overwhelming if they could bring their whole force to bear, but it remained to be decided whether they could do this.

The fact, realized now, but dimly seen then, is that the two "fleets" were radically different, the Spanish of the past, the English of the future. Fighting mainly in the smoother waters of the Mediterranean, the Spanish ship was a castle on the sea, directed by the sailors, or even at times rowed by galley slaves, but depending for fighting purposes on the fact that it carried a mass of well-drilled soldiers. A Spanish ship carried few guns for its size, and little powder for them. Manœuvring, seamanship, gunnery, were all subordinate matters; the one object was to come at once to close quarters, to board and fight it out with steel and arquebus. So the Spaniards had beaten the Turks in the great sea fight of Lepanto. A Spanish fleet was, briefly, an army at sea.<sup>1</sup> But the English seamen, bred in rougher weather, had developed a more seaworthy type of ship, lower, smaller, stiffer, and faster, offering a smaller target, carrying relatively far more guns, and trusting to do its execution at a distance. In the sixteenth century, guns could not be elevated nor depressed, and good shooting therefore depended on steering, and sailing qualities. Thus in a breeze the Spanish ships, badly steered and handled, heeling over before the wind, sent their weather broadsides flying skywards, while their lee guns fired into the sea. The English ships, however, on a more even keel, made sure work, often hulling the Spaniards' exposed sides below the water-line. Even the Spanish size and numbers

Comparison of the two fleets

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Medina-Sidonia was to hand over the conduct of the enterprise to the Duke of Parma (the general) as soon as he met him at Dunkirk.

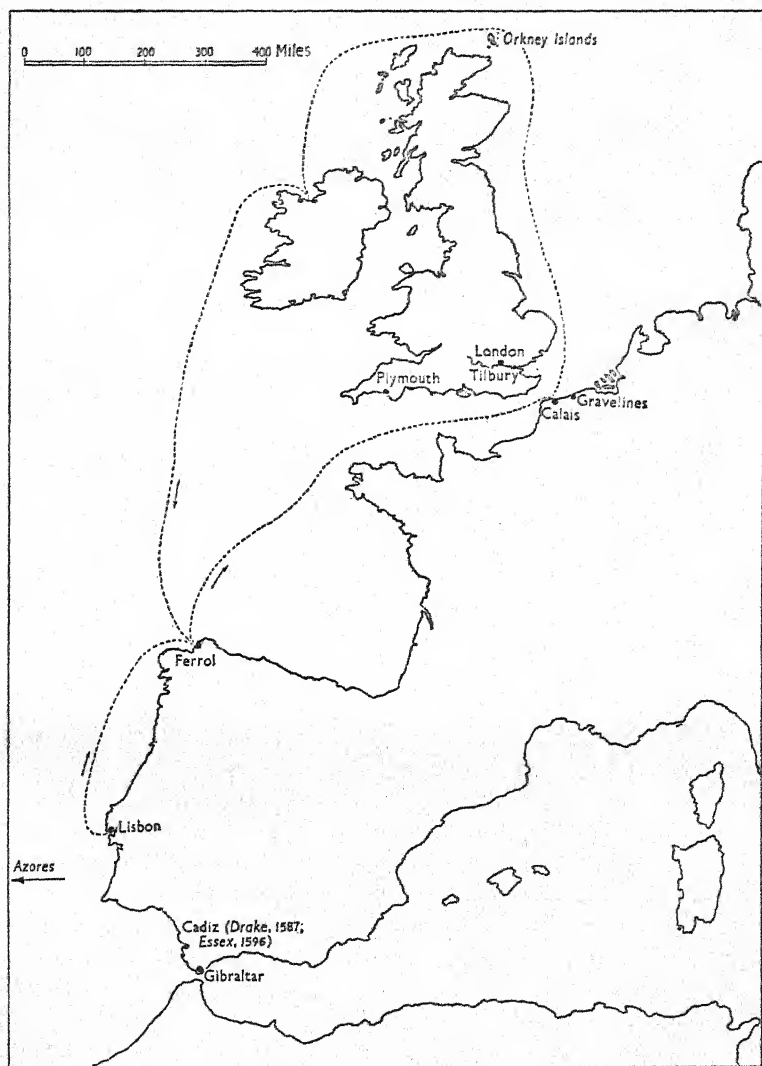
were less formidable than they appeared. Out of their 130 ships only fifty were efficient men-of-war; the rest, store-ships and transports that could not fight, unless by boarding. The total Spanish broadside was in weight only about two-thirds of the English. Their commander, Medina-Sidonia, was a landsman who had offered Philip a number of excellent reasons why he should not be put in command,<sup>1</sup> and was certainly incapable of handling a fleet. Finally, now that the English had got the weather-gage, and could follow the Armada up Channel, making a running fight of it, they could close or not as they wished; and every Spanish ship that was crippled was bound to lag behind and be taken.

These things, however, were to be made clear on the way up Channel; they were not yet seen. All that was known was that the Armada was in the Channel: beacon fires blazed; the militia was called out; 70,000 men gathered in London, and Elizabeth reviewed her men at Tilbury.

The English knew well enough that the object of the Armada was to land Parma's great army. For this invasion Elizabeth at Tilbury they prepared, and Elizabeth herself went to rally her troops. Her speech to them is memorable, for it sums up her character, and her hold on the loyalty of her people: "I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, being resolved in the midst and heat of battle to live or die amongst you all, to lay down for my God and for my Kingdom and for my people my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a King, and I think foul scorn that Parma or Spain or any prince should dare invade the borders of my realm."

Meanwhile, for a breathless week, England waited, and the Armada lumbered on its way up Channel, fighting on

<sup>1</sup> His last and least valid argument was that he was sick when he went to sea. But so was Nelson.



THE ROUTE OF THE ARMADA, 1588



**Armada in the Channel** the 21st, on the 23rd off St. Alban's Head, and on the 25th off St. Catherine's, losing some ships, yet by no means crippled. It anchored at Calais on the 27th, ready to embark Parma's men.

Here came the first great blow. Parma was not ready; the Dutch held him blockaded. He wrote to Medina-Sidonia bidding him clear the sea of the English and Dutch; that done, all would be well.

**The fire-ships at Calais** While Medina-Sidonia and his captains were considering this unsatisfactory reply, eight fire ships were sent drifting with the tide into Calais Roads. Panic seized the Spaniards, who cut their cables and sailed eastwards, scattering as they went. The next day (29th July), of the whole Spanish fleet which was nominally engaged, only fifteen, those round Medina-Sidonia, managed to come to close quarters; but they were shorter of powder even than the English: in the words of a Spaniard who took part in the battle, "they fighting with their great ordnance, and our men defending themselves with harquebus fire and musketry". Some were taken, some sunk, and some ran aground, a fate that would have befallen them all had the wind not shifted more to the southward. But by the evening the Armada — still to Drake's mind "wonderful and strong, yet we pluck their feathers little by little" — in reality a beaten fleet, was flying northward. **The storm** Storms, the rocks of Scotland and Ireland, did the rest. Far out into the Atlantic <sup>1</sup> as the ships beat their way, yet their leeway brought them in again, and Mull, the Giant's Causeway, Donegal, and Achill all took toll of them. Twelve were embayed in Sligo Bay, and to those who got ashore the wild Irish of the west were as merciless as the sea. Fifty-three only got back to Spain. Philip gave the weather-worn survivors magnanimous consolation: "I sent you forth to fight with men, and not with the elements". Elizabeth, piously, was of the same mind, inscribing on her Armada medal, *Afflavit Deus*, "God blew

<sup>1</sup> 400 miles westward from the north of Scotland.

with His wind, and they were scattered ". Yet the fact is not so; the Armada had all in its favour till the panic at Calais; till, in short, it had failed. And how complete the failure was, is revealed by a few figures. In the first day's battle only two Englishmen were killed, and only sixty in the whole fighting. The Spaniards *lost more ships than we did men*. The Spanish fleet was hopelessly overmatched in the kind of warfare it encountered. It could never have beat its way down Channel against the English fleet; thus there only remained the way round by the north, and that was certain destruction.

So the great thundercloud that had gathered against England for close on forty years hung imminent for a week, broke, and passed away. (*Note 55.*)

#### 6. ELIZABETH AND PARLIAMENT: SOCIAL MEASURES: ELIZABETH AND ESSEX

Nearly fifteen more years remained to the great queen after the Armada was beaten, and they were fifteen years of glory. Yet in a sense the reign ends in 1588. The climax was reached, the day won, the policy of the Queen and her ministers triumphant. For a while the war with Spain went on. In 1589 Drake led an expedition to Portugal, and in 1590 Sir Richard Grenville fought the amazing fight of "the one and the fifty-three", where, though the

The end  
of the war

" Little *Revenge* herself went down by the island crags,  
To be lost evermore in the main ",

the memory of her and her commander will abide so long as the Jack flies in the wind. Drake, and Hawkins with him, tried a last cruise to the West Indies in 1594, which failed, both commanders dying at sea. Two years later Howard, Raleigh, and Essex sacked Cadiz again, destroying the Spanish ships at their moorings. More fatal to Spain was the fact that every cargo from the Indies, every ship crossing the Atlantic, every reinforcement going to the Low Countries,

Second  
attack on  
Cadiz  
(1596)

had to run the gauntlet of English free-booters; and little escaped them. So the wealth and power of Spain was drained away. Her silver from the New World robbed, her rich possessions in the Netherlands lost to her, her decline began, and became more and more marked. In France, too, Spanish policy failed; the Huguenot Henry of Navarre established himself on the throne with Elizabeth's aid, in defiance of the Guises and the Spanish party; and, once there, began the building up of that great French ascendancy which was to replace the Habsburg power that had domineered over Europe so long.

Elizabeth and Parliament entered upon a new phase. The country was safe, and now we have to note the first signs of coming change. Elizabeth was so popular, and her people felt such respect for her, that she was able to have things largely her own way. Yet Parliament did begin to oppose her, and over the very two matters which were to lead to such strife in the future under the Stuarts — religion and money.

The Puritans For already a large number of her subjects had adopted the new ideas which had made such headway abroad. The "Puritans", as they were called, wished to reform and alter the Church, making it more Protestant. Elizabeth would have none of this, she forbade Parliament to discuss the matter, and ordered the Archbishop of Canterbury to deal with those of the clergy who showed Puritan leanings.

The "Mar-Prelate Tracts" In 1583, Whitgift had become Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a stern disciplinarian, and had the Queen's complete confidence.<sup>1</sup> The Press was muzzled, no manuscript being allowed to be set up in type without the licence of the Archbishop or the Bishop of London. In spite of this, however, the "Mar-Prelate Tracts", which were violent attacks on the bishops, were being secretly printed. The authors were never discovered, but some other libellers were caught and

<sup>1</sup> The Queen used to call him "her little black husband", and treated him as her confessor to whom she revealed "the very secrets of her soul".

were put to death. The Queen delegated to the Court of High Commission the punishment of ecclesiastical offences, and, armed with tremendous powers, it persecuted the more advanced exponents of the Puritan doctrines. The *Brownists* (so called because of their leader Robert Browne), who held opinions then considered very extreme and had seceded from the Church, were especially attacked, and a large number took refuge in Holland, whence many returned to make the famous voyage in *The Mayflower* to America in 1620.

Elizabeth also fell out with Parliament over money. She had granted "Monopolies", or the sole right to manufacture certain goods, to people who paid her for the privilege, and they made profits for themselves out of the sale of the goods. Parliament saw in this an "illegal" way for the Crown to raise money, and objected. Elizabeth was forced to give way and promise not to make such grants. (*Note 58.*)

Shortly after the Armada, many of Elizabeth's older ministers — those servants who had served her so well in her critical years — died: Leicester, Walsingham, Hatton, were all dead by 1591. Burleigh survived till 1598. Of the younger men, Robert Cecil inherited his father, Burleigh's caution; but Sir Walter Raleigh and Essex were of a wilder school.

In the first and last years of her life, too, two important pieces of work were accomplished dealing with the problem of unemployment.

First she tried, in the Statute of Apprentices, to keep people at work and ensure proper payment for those in work. The Justices in each district were to draw up rates of pay for every sort of employment — agricultural, industrial, and domestic service. These wages were to be based on local prices, and thus an effort was made to see that the workers received a wage on which they could live.

To Elizabeth too belongs the credit of attempting to deal with the problem of relief of the poor. Her Act made the

The Elizabethan poor law (1601) State responsible for those who whether through age, or illness, or unemployment, were in distress. Each parish was made responsible for its poor. A rate was levied on each household, and the local J.P.s were responsible for its administration. The old were to be put in almshouses, children were to be apprenticed to a trade, those who were sick were to be cared for. Able-bodied persons were to be found work, and if they were unwilling to work were to be whipped. If no work was available, then they were to be supported from the poor-rate. (*Note 51.*)

These social reforms were accompanied by a great effort to improve the coinage. All debased coins were called in, and a fresh and better currency issued.

Trading Companies Finally, in these closing years, Elizabeth granted charters to the great trading companies. She gave charters to the Muscovy Company, trading in Russia; to the East-land Company, trading in the Baltic; to the Levant Company, trading in the near East. In 1600 she granted the charter of the famous East India Company, which was the pioneer of "joint stock", that is to say, the members pooled their capital and divided profits. This marked a new era in commercial development, and to this company was later due the rise of our Indian Empire. (*Note 57.*)

Elizabeth and Essex Essex, stepson of Elizabeth's old friend Leicester, was a young man who now became the most popular figure in England. Elizabeth was devoted to him and treated him almost like a favourite son. London adored him, because of his dash and splendour. He was, however, headstrong and rash. The Queen had sent him, with Howard of Effingham, to attack Cadiz. He quarrelled with Howard, and the expedition failed to destroy the Spanish fleet. Next Essex clamoured to be allowed to go to Ireland, where Tyrone was in revolt. Elizabeth gave way, partly to test him. Essex showed that he was not only incapable, but treacherous. Instead of fighting, he made a secret treaty with Tyrone, and then dashed back, contrary to orders, to

make his peace with the Queen. She banished him from Court, and, furious at his failures, Essex plotted against her. In 1601 he tried to raise a rebellion, collected a body of men, and attempted to seize the Queen. The Londoners would not join him, and the Queen's armed men easily dispersed his followers and captured Essex himself. He was tried for treason, found guilty, and beheaded.

His death marked the beginning of the end. Elizabeth never recovered from the shock. Gradually her strength failed, and, in 1603, she died. It was the end of a very great reign.

Death of  
Elizabeth

So the great Queen died — a true Tudor, in that she understood her people, even better than her ministers did; singularly unscrupulous, yet magnificently successful; unlovable in character, yet romantically beloved; served throughout her reign with wonderful loyalty, yet as parsimonious in her reward of it as she was with her money; vain, untruthful, capricious, and sometimes mean; yet, with all her defects, undoubtedly great. Her policy, so hesitating in appearance, was wise in its very uncertainty. Fools, in difficulties, rush into hasty decisions. What England wanted was time. Time for the Established Church to grow firmer, time for the new alliance with Scotland to settle, time to breed the race of seamen who beat off the Armada; and that Elizabeth gave England. At the end came peace at home, a high reputation abroad, and — Elizabeth's greatest gift — a nation proud of itself and confident in its future.

## 7. ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

It is a commonplace to say that great as the reign was in political importance, it is equally glorious in the world of literature. What is called "the Elizabethan school of letters" is one of the most magnificent of English achievements. In every direction there was an outburst of life and beauty. *Shakespeare* stands apart and unrivalled, yet there are many

The Eliza-  
bethan  
men of  
letters



Shake- other Elizabethan dramatists whose works shine out and are  
 speare perhaps less familiar only because Shakespeare has absorbed  
 Other so much attention. *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* in collaboration  
 drama- wrote many dramas in beautiful verse, and in some, such as  
 tists *Philaster*, dealt with plots very close to Shakespeare's tradi-  
 tion. *Ben Jonson* wrote not only plays which won him in-  
 stant fame, but also some of the most beautiful songs in our  
 language (such as "Drink to me only with thine eyes").  
*Webster* in his *Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil* brought  
 some of the magnificence as well as the horror and cruelty of  
 the Renaissance into English literature. *Christopher Marlowe*  
 in *Doctor Faustus* produced one of the greatest of romantic  
 dramas on that eternally interesting theme, and one con-  
 taining wonderful poetry, and in his *Edward II* wrote a  
 historical play which gives us some foretaste of what he  
 might have achieved had not his life been thrown away in a  
 tavern quarrel before he was thirty. Ford, Massinger, Kyd,  
 Chapman — they go to make up the band whom Dryden  
 called "the giant race".<sup>1</sup>

Yet this wonderful band of dramatists only represents one  
 Poets part of the Elizabethan achievement. *Edmund Spenser* in  
 his *Faerie Queene* wrote one of the most poetic of romances,  
 and one which poets have always loved and admired. *Francis*  
*Bacon's* Essays still are unsurpassed in their depth of thought  
 and terse vigour of expression. *John Donne* was the first,  
 and he remains one of the greatest, of our "metaphysical"  
 poets, besides joining the number of those who gave us one  
 of the loveliest forms in our poetry, the lyric. For the  
 Lyric writers of lyric verse now seemed to flower as never before.  
 Some of the dramatists, notably *Fletcher*, also wrote en-  
 chantingly beautiful lyrics. *Heywood*, *Thomas Campion*, *Sir*  
*Philip Sidney*, *Peele*, *Lodge*, *Thomas Dekker*, *Thomas Nashe*  
 — such a list in itself shows the riches of the age, and the  
 verse those men wrote is to-day as lovely and as fresh in

<sup>1</sup> Some of the writers who rank as Elizabethan do so because they were born in that epoch, though their mature works actually appeared during the reign of James I. These include Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford, Jonson, and Donne.



its appeal as any verse in our language. Though their names may not in themselves mean much to us, their poems are familiar to us all, and we realize our debt to the Elizabethans when we recall that they wrote, amongst many others, such favourites as "There is a garden in her face, Where roses and white lilies blow", "Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?" "Pack, clouds, away! and welcome, day!", "Drop, drop, slow tears", "Shall I, wasting in despair, Die because a woman's fair?", "My true love hath my heart, and I have his".

Shakespeare must close, as he began, the tale of Elizabethan glories, for in his Sonnets, as in his plays, he touched the height of man's achievements.

The intense vitality of the Elizabethans, their imagination, their love of beauty and their love of nature, give a variety and a richness to their works which combine with an equally wonderful beauty of simplicity. This in part may explain why their work has always appealed to men in every generation, and why to-day their glory still shines so brightly. (Note 52.)

### CHAPTER 33

#### IRELAND UNDER THE TUDORS, 1485-1603

We turn now to survey the history of Ireland under the Tudors. When Henry VII ascended the English throne in 1485, Ireland was in a deplorably backward condition. The Renaissance and all the movements connected with it had left Ireland completely untouched. Learning had perished. Religion had no real hold upon the people. The country was covered with forests and bogs which made communication difficult, and roads were almost non-existent; and it is reckoned that of the three-quarters of a million people inhabiting the land, at least two-thirds led a wild and uncivilized existence. "*The Pale*" — the district

Condition  
of Ireland  
(1485)

The Pale

where English jurisdiction was actually established — had been gradually reduced till it only included a stretch of country, some thirty miles wide, from Dundalk to Dublin; outside this area Irish customs and the Irish language prevailed, and each Irish chieftain was supreme in his own district. The descendants of the Anglo-Normans who had conquered the country in Henry II's day had become *Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores* — more Irish than the Irish themselves. Of these the chief families were the *Butlers*, under the Earl of Ormonde in the south-east, and the *Fitz-Geralds* or *Geraldines*, under the headship of the Earl of Desmond in Munster, and under that of the Earl of Kildare in Leinster. Of the old Irish families perhaps the most important were the *O'Neills* and the *O'Donnells* in Ulster.

The great families

From the accession of Henry VII till the year 1534 there is little to record in Irish history. An Irish bishop, so runs the story, once told Henry VII that all Ireland could not rule the Earl of Kildare. "Then," said the King, "he must be the man to rule all Ireland." At all events, whether the story is true or false, Ireland was governed for the greater part of this period by two successive *Earls of Kildare*, though their rule was tempered by occasional intervals of imprisonment in the Tower of London.<sup>1</sup> It was during one of these periods when the Earl of Kildare was under suspicion of treason that *Sir Edward Poynings* was sent out to Ireland as "Lord Deputy". Poynings managed to get two laws passed in the Irish Parliament which made that Parliament completely dependent upon England; for no Parliament was in future to be summoned without the consent of the King and his Privy Council — the King in Council, as it was called — nor could it discuss any bills without the consent of the same authority (1494).

The rule of the Earls of Kildare (1485-1534)

Poynings' laws (1494)

With the year 1534, Henry VIII began to take a more

<sup>1</sup> The first of these two earls, called "the Great Earl", ruled the country for nearly thirty years before his death in 1513. He was a person of remarkable gifts; moreover, he collected an excellent library of Latin, English, French, and Irish books, and his praises were sung by the great Italian poet of the day, Ariosto.

active part in the affairs of Ireland. The Earl of Kildare, of whose government complaints had been made, was summoned to England, and, his answers not being considered satisfactory, he was put, not for the first time, into the Tower. His son, called "Silken Thomas" from the silken fringe on his helmet, who had heard that his father had been executed and that his family were to be exterminated, rose in rebellion. But the great stronghold of the Geraldines in Leinster, the Castle of *Maynooth*, was taken by the new English lord deputy, and the army which Silken Thomas — now Earl of Kildare, as his father had died in the Tower — was bringing to its relief "melted away like a snowdrift" on the news of its capture. Finally Thomas surrendered himself to the King's mercy and was sent to England, and, some months later, he and his five uncles, three of whom had been treacherously seized at a dinner party to which they had been invited, suffered the penalties of treason at Tyburn. So fell the great house of Kildare.<sup>1</sup>

Revolt of  
Kildares

The remainder of Henry VIII's reign saw a steady development of the king's power; and for the future, English lord deputies were appointed. The Irish Parliament recognized Henry as King of Ireland. Religious changes similar to those in England were made: the Papacy was repudiated and Henry declared "Head of the Irish Church"; the monasteries were dissolved and some of the images in the churches destroyed. Towards the Irish chieftains Henry pursued a policy of "sober ways, politic shifts, and amiable persuasions lest by extreme demands they should revolt to their former beastliness". He made arrangements with many of them by which, in return for acknowledging his sovereignty in Church and State, and surrendering the land of the tribes to him, they received English titles and the gift of some monastic lands, besides the re-grant to them-

Changes  
in Ireland  
(1535-47)

<sup>1</sup> Of the male branch of the family only one child — the brother of "Silken Thomas" — survived; but he was taken by his aunt to a place of safety in the wilds of Ireland, and eventually escaped to France. After fighting on behalf of the Knights of Rhodes against the Moors, he returned to Ireland, and was given back the Kildare lands in Mary's reign.

selves and their heirs of the lands of their tribe. Henry's policy was successful during his lifetime, and it was said, just before his death, "that there lives not any in Ireland, even were he of the age of Nestor, who ever saw his country in a more peaceable state".

Moreover, in the reigns of Henry's successors there was little trouble. The advisers of Edward VI met with little opposition in making further changes in a Protestant direction, whilst the lord deputy had no difficulty in persuading the Irish Parliament to restore the authority of the Pope in Mary's reign and to repudiate it again on the accession of Elizabeth.

**Shane O'Neill's Rebellion (1562)** The reign of Elizabeth, however, was one long catalogue of rebellions. In the early years of her reign occurred the rising of *Shane O'Neill*. He claimed the headship of the O'Neill tribe and the earldom of Tyrone, bestowed on Shane's father by Henry VIII. There was a rival claimant whom the British Government at first supported, but eventually, after many changes, Elizabeth recognized Shane's rights.<sup>1</sup> But Shane had large ambitions. He wished to become supreme in Ulster; he had a large army at his disposal; and he intrigued with Mary Queen of Scots, and with Charles IX, the King of France. Finally, the English Government proclaimed him a traitor. Shane was defeated and then killed, and his head, "pickled in a pipkin", was sent to the English lord deputy (1567).

**Revival of Catholicism** But meanwhile came a great religious revival in Ireland. Outside "the Pale" little or no attempt had been made to enforce Protestantism. It is true that during Elizabeth's reign a law was passed forbidding the exercise of any religious worship except the Anglican, but it was impossible to enforce such an act against a whole nation, and the Irish Roman Catholics practically possessed liberty of worship. The reign of Elizabeth was contemporaneous with the great

<sup>1</sup> Shane came over himself to England to Elizabeth's Court attended by bare-headed followers in saffron-coloured shirts and rough friezes, who made an immense sensation in London.

movement known as the Counter-Reformation, when the Roman Catholics recovered much ground that they had previously lost. Nowhere did the movement meet with more striking success than in Ireland. Soon after the accession of Elizabeth, Jesuit priests came over and obtained enormous influence, and on Elizabeth's excommunication in 1570 the Pope was regarded as the temporal ruler of Ireland. Moreover, there were expectations of assistance from Philip II of Spain.

The  
Jesuit  
mission

Hence, as a consequence, there were two rebellions headed by that branch of the FitzGeralds who lived in Munster. The first was unimportant, but the second, which broke out in 1579, led to a great and general rising under the *Earl of Desmond*. The rebels met with some success, and a Spanish and Italian force landed and occupied *Smerwick*.<sup>1</sup> But the foreigners very quickly surrendered and were all — to the number of six hundred — put to the sword as pirates because they could produce no mandate from Philip II. Finally, after a campaign of four years, Munster was quelled. The war had been one of the most appalling ferocity; no Irish soldier was promised quarter, it was said, unless he brought the head of another Irishman with him; Munster had been converted into a desert, and in the last six months of the war it was calculated that no less than thirty thousand people had died of starvation.<sup>2</sup> It was then determined to "plant" Munster with English colonists. Such an idea was not new — in Mary's reign arrangements had been made to "plant" part of the counties known up till 1921 as "King's County" and "Queen's County", arrangements carried out on Elizabeth's acces-

The  
Desmond  
Rebellion  
(1579-83)

"Plantation" of  
Munster

<sup>1</sup> A nuncio from the Pope, Dr. Nicholas Sandars, also arrived with them, and showed great activity in directing the rebellion. He baffled all attempts at capture, but finally died of exposure and cold, his body being found in a wood "with his Breviary and his Bible under his arm."

<sup>2</sup> The poet Spenser's description of the condition of the people after the rebellion is well known: "Out of every corner of woods and glens they came creeping forth, for their legs would not bear them; they looked like anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves, and a most populous and plentiful country was suddenly left void of man and beast."

sion. But now it was to be done on a gigantic scale; nearly half a million acres were distributed to "undertakers" who undertook to introduce English settlers — an agreement which in many cases, however, was not carried out.<sup>3</sup>

The last and most formidable rebellion of all had its centre in the north of Ireland. Its leaders were *Hugh O'Neill*, *Earl of Tyrone*, and *Hugh Roe*, the head of the *O'Donnells*. Tyrone won a victory at the "Yellow Ford" on the Blackwater in 1598. Had he shown more enterprise he might have succeeded in taking Dublin. As it was, his victory led to a fresh rising in Munster. Moreover, the Spaniards made an alliance with him and sent him arms and money; and the Pope presented him with a "peacock's feather" and promised indulgence to all who would rise in defence of the Church. The situation looked serious — never before had there been a rebellion which had united so many tribes in Ireland, or which partook more of a national rising.

*Essex*, Elizabeth's favourite, was sent over in 1599, but he made a truce with Tyrone instead of fighting him and then went home (see p. 370). His successor, Lord *Mountjoy*, found, on his arrival in 1600, the rebels in control of all Ireland up to the walls of Dublin. But he was a man of great capacity. He compelled a Spanish force which had landed at Kinsale to surrender. Then, turning against Tyrone, he carried on a war rather, it has been said, "with the spade than the sword". He built forts at all the chief passes to stop communications, and by systematically ravaging each district starved it out. His methods were successful; and in 1603, just before the news of Elizabeth's death reached Ireland, Tyrone submitted on promise that his title and his lands should be restored to him.

At Elizabeth's death the conquest of Ireland was for the first time complete. Yet it had been carried out with ex-

<sup>3</sup> Amongst the "undertakers" were Sir Walter Raleigh and the poet Spenser. It was in Ireland that Spenser wrote a great part of the *Faerie Queene*. When Raleigh was his guest, Spenser showed him the first three books. Raleigh was delighted with them, and they came over to London together in 1589 to see about their publication.

Tyrone's  
Rebellion  
(1595-  
1603)

Failure of  
of Essex  
in Ireland  
(1599)

End of  
revolt

cessive brutality, and Elizabeth was told, at the end of her life, that she reigned but over "ashes and dead carcasses". Horrors of  
Irish  
warfare  
No doubt the brutalities were by no means confined to the English side. Moreover, the Irish were regarded, in Spenser's words, as "a savage nation", and they were in league with the two mortal foes of the English — the Pope and the King of Spain; and their chiefs were often very unreliable and treacherous in their dealings with the English lord deputy. Yet, making allowance for all these facts, it is difficult to excuse much that was done, and the Irish Protestants were to pay dearly in 1641 for the evil deeds perpetrated during the reign of the great Queen. (*Note 56.*)



## NOTES ON PERIOD FIVE (1485-1603)

### RULERS OF ENGLAND

HENRY VII (1485-1509)  
HENRY VIII (1509-1547)  
EDWARD VI (1547-1553)  
MARY (1553-1558)  
ELIZABETH (1558-1603)

### RULERS OF SCOTLAND

JAMES IV (1488-1513)  
JAMES V (1513-1542)  
MARY (1542-1567)  
JAMES VI (1567-1603)

### IMPORTANT FOREIGN RULERS

EMPIRE: CHARLES V (1519-1556)  
FERDINAND I (1556-1564)  
POPES: JULIUS II (1503-1513)  
CLEMENT VII (1523-1534)  
FRANCE: FRANCIS I (1515-1547)  
HENRY IV (Henry of Navarre) (1589-1610)  
SPAIN: FERDINAND and ISABELLA (1479-1516)  
CHARLES V (1516-1556)  
PHILIP II (1556-1598)  
SWEDEN: GUSTAVUS VASA (1523-1560)  
RUSSIA: IVAN IV (1533-1584). First Czar of Russia

### NOTE 38. — IMPORTANCE OF THE REIGN OF HENRY VII

#### 1. Power of Nobles Checked.

Wars of the Roses had *destroyed many of the nobility*. Henry VII now finally checked their power.

- (a) He forbade "livery" and stopped armies of retainers.
- (b) He had monopoly of gunpowder, and so nobles could not hold castles against the King.
- (c) He reorganized the Court of *Star Chamber*, where the King's judges could not be overawed by mighty lords, or bribed by them

- (d) He employed "middle-class" men as officials (such as Empson and Dudley) who were efficient, but who entirely depended on the King.
  - (e) He taxed the nobles very heavily, through forced loans and benevolences.
2. **Henry's Foreign Policy.**
- (a) He made alliance with *Scotland*, and married his daughter Margaret to the Scottish King (hence future line of Stuart Kings in England).
  - (b) He made alliance with *Spain*, and married first his son Arthur, and then his son Henry, to Katherine, daughter of the King of Aragon. (Hence future trouble over Henry's "divorce".)
  - (c) He made a half-hearted attack on *France* and allowed himself to be bought off (*Treaty of Étaples*).
  - (d) He made commercial treaties with Flanders, which were very advantageous to England (*Magnus Intercursus*).
3. **Henry's reign saw dawn of the Renaissance.**
- Invention of printing; development of the "new learning"; revival of Greek; beginning of the Reformation abroad; early discoveries of the explorers (Cabots sail to America), of route to India, and of America.

## NOTE 39. — REVOLTS AGAINST HENRY VII

1. Henry's claim to the throne was very weak. He claimed
- (a) Through his mother, Margaret Beaufort, who was descended from John of Gaunt, third son of Edward III, but the Beauforts' claim had been disallowed by Parliament.
  - (b) Through his wife, who was the heir of Edward IV.
  - (c) Through the decision of Parliament to accept him as King. Hence revolts based on rival claims.
2. **Lambert Simnel** pretended to be the heir of Clarence, the brother of Edward IV, and the male heir of the Yorkists. Henry defeated Simnel at *Stoke* (1487), and produced the real son of Clarence to show Simnel was a fraud.
3. **Perkin Warbeck** claimed to be one of the Princes in the Tower (the younger one, Richard of York) as their death had never been proved. He was supported by
- (a) The Lancastrians — Queen Margaret recognized his claims and backed him.
  - (b) The King of Scotland recognized his claim and married him to one of the royal family.
  - (c) The Irish supported him.
- He was defeated when he landed in Devon (1497) and imprisoned. Henry later accused him of plotting with Edward of Clarence, and both were executed (1499).

## NOTE 40. — THE RENAISSANCE

Henry VII's reign marks the beginnings of "modern Europe". The Renaissance first began in Italy, the richest and most civilized country of the world in those days, then spread to France, later to England.

1. It was marked by the "*revival of learning*" especially of the study of the classics. Greek was once more studied with enthusiasm. At Oxford Grocyn, Linacre, and Colet taught it.
2. New ideas in *education* were developed, and in England we have schools founded, e.g. St. Paul's, by Colet.
3. The invention of *printing* stimulated learning, and made education more widespread.
4. The *arts* flourished, and painters and architects introduced new schools of art, and new type of architecture both in churches and in houses. (Castles lost importance through their weakness against gunfire.)
5. In *religion* men began to criticize established doctrines and organization. Erasmus never was a "Protestant" but he paved the way to criticism and study of the Bible by his new edition of the Greek Testament with a new translation of it into Latin. He, Colet, and More, also criticized clerical learning.

## NOTE 41. — HENRY VIII AND WOLSEY

Wolsey is typical of the Tudor minister coming from the middle-class, and rising through his ability. Entered the Church, became royal chaplain, helped to fit out a French expedition, 1513. Rose to be Archbishop of York and Chancellor of England.

## 1. Wolsey's Foreign Policy.

- (a) *Championed end of French war*, advocated a *French alliance*. Louis XII, married Henry's sister Mary. Marked beginning of England's opposition to Spain.
- (b) On Louis' death (1515), followed by that of Ferdinand of Spain, a change in Europe. Charles the Emperor very powerful. *Wolsey again negotiated French alliance* and Henry's daughter Mary betrothed to French dauphin (1516). Wolsey now negotiated a "universal peace", Emperor, England, Scotland, Spain, and France.
- (c) On death of Emperor (1519), rivalry between Charles of Spain, and Francis of France, and Henry of England. England *neutral* and both powers sought her help. Charles elected. England said to hold "balance of power".
- (d) *Henry set aside Wolsey's preference* for French alliance, and after Field of Cloth of Gold, met Charles at Gravelines and made treaty with Emperor (1520). Failure of the war in France, Henry's attack useless.

- (b) After defeat of Francis I at Pavia (1525) Henry alarmed at supremacy of Charles, and *returned to Wolsey's policy of alliance with France.*

*Summary:* Some consider Wolsey aimed always at a "balance of power", with England acting as decisive factor between France and Spain. Actually Wolsey favoured French alliance, but his main object was to raise English prestige and make both parties desire England's help.

## 2. Wolsey's Home Policy.

- (a) Wolsey was aware of need for reform of the Church. He began to suppress some of the small monasteries. Founded schools and colleges with the money.
- (b) Henry and Wolsey both strong supporters of Church doctrine.
- (c) Wolsey favoured Henry's "divorce" from Katherine of Aragon, for he shared Henry's view that *the succession must be secured*. He planned a marriage of Henry with a French princess (1526). He believed the Pope might declare the marriage with Katherine "null", i.e. not a true marriage.
- (d) Capture of the Pope by Charles V, Katherine's nephew (1527) made it difficult for Pope to declare marriage "null and void".
  - (i) Pope Clement played for time, sent Campeggio to act with Wolsey and try the whole question. Failed to get decision. Wolsey now wished for delay. Disliked Anne Boleyn.
  - (ii) Henry decided to defy the Pope. Threw over Wolsey, and accused him of breaking "praemunire", i.e. appealing to a foreign court. Wolsey dismissed from Chancellorship — disgraced, and later accused of treason. Died on way to London (1530).

## NOTE 42. — HENRY AND THE BREACH WITH ROME

Henry was never opposed to Roman Catholic faith (he wrote against Luther in his youth), but he was opposed to the Papacy. His attitude shared by many devout men, such as More and Colet.

1. The "divorce" question led him to attack *Papal authority in England*. He could quote former acts against Papal authority. Henry appealed to the English universities, and finally to the court of the Archbishops, who declared his former marriage null.
2. England had always objected to appeals to Rome, and these now again forbidden by *Act of Appeals* (1533), forbidding any such appeals from the English courts to Rome. (After this Henry made public his marriage to Anne Boleyn, as Cranmer's decision could be taken as final.)

3. *Finance* gave him a weapon. All England objected to
  - (a) Payment of *annates* and Henry passed Act forbidding them (1532). (Annates were first year's income from a benefice or bishopric.)
  - (b) Objected equally to pluralities, fees charged by clergy, benefit of clergy, hence forbade these by *Act of Abuses* (1529). (Pluralities meant one man held several benefices or bishoprics.)
4. *Act of Succession* then recognized children of Henry and Anne's marriage as lawful heirs of Henry. Pope retaliated by annulling Cranmer's sentence (1534).
5. Henry then declared himself head of the Church in England by the *Act of Supremacy* (1534).  
(More and Fisher had accepted all the Acts checking Papal power in England, and they accepted the Act of Succession, but they would not take the oath to recognize Henry as Supreme Head of the Church.)
6. Henry attacked Church property, and dissolved the smaller monasteries (1536), (the greater monasteries, 1539).  
 Note: All the above Acts were passed by the *Reformation Parliament*, 1529-35.
7. Henry affirmed his belief in *Catholic doctrine*, as apart from Papal power, by the *Act of Six Articles* (called the whip with six strings) 1539 which declared people must accept the chief doctrines of the Church (transubstantiation, private masses, confession, celibacy of the clergy, vows of chastity, and communion in one kind). Severe penalties were imposed and Henry posed as upholding the Church against heresy.

#### NOTE 43. — THOMAS CROMWELL

The first great "lay-minister", Wolsey being the last great Churchman. Cromwell the "hammer of the monks". Like Wolsey, rose by his ability. Served under Wolsey, was brought forward by him, and remained loyal to him. Educated in Italy, a lawyer and no churchman, good financier and man of business.

1. **Subdued the Church to the King.**
  - (a) Only those could preach who had royal license.
  - (b) Forced clergy to accept Act of Supremacy (1534).
  - (c) Brought about deaths of all who refused to accept the Act and swear allegiance, More, Fisher, and monks of the Charterhouse.
2. **Attacked the Monasteries.**
  - (a) Smaller monasteries dissolved (many of those were corrupt and useless) and this led to northern rebellion. *Pilgrimage of Grace* to demand restoration of monasteries and dismissal of Cromwell. Revolt put down severely (1536).
  - (b) Went on to *dissolve greater monasteries* (1539).  
*Reason given:* that monasteries were idle, corrupt, and useless, and that they owed obedience to the Pope.  
*Really,* King wanted their wealth, which was great, and used it to bribe the nobility to support his policy.

**Results:**

- (a) Tudor nobility and middle classes became fixed supporters of anti-papal policy.
  - (b) The poor suffered, as monasteries relieved poor. But, the monasteries were "old-fashioned" landlords and therefore employed too many people; the new landlords and new methods employed fewer people, and hence increased unemployment for a time.
  - (c) New class of land-owners created just when new methods of "enclosure" were coming into force; this helped progress of farming eventually, as the great woollen industry expanded owing to enclosure for pasture.
3. **Encouraged Reformation in England.**  
*Tyndale* had translated the Bible into English, but now *Miles Coverdale's* translation encouraged by Cromwell. Both versions combined and placed in the churches as the *Great Bible*.  
 Services in English also published.
4. **Cromwell's Foreign Policy.**  
 Encouraged alliance with Protestant princes in Germany. Meant to raise up trouble for the Emperor and the Pope. Advocated marriage with Anne of Cleves, a Protestant princess. Marriage a failure. Fall and execution of Cromwell (1540).

## NOTE 44.—THE REFORMATION ABROAD

1. **Forerunners of the Reformation.**

- (a) *Erasmus* (1467–1536), a Fleming, left his monastery, and became a scholar and critic. Studied in Paris, and *Oxford*, and travelled in Germany and Italy. Attacked old scholastic methods of monks (in *Praise of Folly*); published a new version of Greek Testament (1516) and published it with Latin version. Criticized Papal authority.
- (b) *Thomas More* (1478–1535), an "Oxford Reformer" (Colet and Erasmus worked with him); wished for reform of Papacy. Studied the "New Learning", wrote *Utopia* (1526) to show the evils of the day, especially the sufferings of the poor—and an ideal country with no war, no poverty, no luxury, no State religion; labour shared by all, and all happy in work.

Worked with the King and ready to accept his "divorce", and re-marriage. Became Chancellor on fall of Wolsey (1530). Remained faithful to Catholic doctrine, and beheaded for refusing to accept Act of Supremacy (1535).

2. **The Reformation in Germany.**

- (a) *Luther*, a monk, left his monastery in 1508. Attacked, first, abuses of the Papacy, especially indulgences. Then refused to obey Pope's order to be silent. Wrote advocating a Council, as above Pope, went on to attack doctrines. Condemned as a heretic, at *Diet of Worms*, 1521.

- (b) Various of the German princes adopted Luther's ideas and became "Protestant". As such, were attacked by the Emperor, who championed the cause of the Church.

### 3. The Reformation in Switzerland and France.

- (a) *Zwingli*, in Switzerland, became an extreme reformer, and attacked Papal doctrine.
- (b) In 1536 *Calvin*, a Frenchman, fled to Switzerland, and set up his new Church at *Geneva*. Preached "predestination" and "election by Grace". Based his Church on democratic lines. His Church governed by elders or presbyters (hence Presbyterianism) and his ministers had power to consecrate others. No bishops, and no other ranks.

The three foreign Protestant Churches, Lutheran, Zwinglian, and Calvinist, all

- (i) Denied the power of the Pope.
- (ii) Established ministers but no bishops.
- (iii) Denied the doctrine of the mass.
- (iv) Held services in the native tongue of the people, not in Latin.
- (v) Based their doctrine on the right of each man to study and interpret the Bible.

(The Church of England compromises in many ways, and while later rejecting the doctrines of the mass, and other points, retains bishops, and a service which though in English was based on the Roman service. The bulk of the people followed Henry in his Anti-papal legislation, but disliked later changes.)

#### NOTE 45. — SCOTLAND AND THE EARLY TUDORS

1. House of Stuart now reigning in Scotland; King *James IV*, allied with *England*, and married *Margaret*, daughter of *Henry VII*.
2. (a) *Henry VIII* on his accession quarrelled with *James IV*, who returned to the alliance with *France*. *James IV* attacked *England*, and defeated at *Flodden* (1513). Succeeded by son, *James V*.
- (b) When *Henry* broke off from *Rome*, he wished his nephew, *James V*, to do so too. *James* refused, and when *Henry* allied with the German Protestants *James* allied with *France* and married *Mary of Guise*.
- (c) *James* attacked *England*, was defeated at *Solway Moss* (1542), and died immediately after.

*Henry VIII* then hoped to unite the Kingdoms by marrying *James's* only child *Mary*, to his only son *Edward*, and by the *Treaty of Greenwich* (1543) some of the Scottish nobles agreed. But Treaty not carried out before *Henry's* death.



## NOTE 46. — EDWARD VI

**Two Phases of his Reign.****1. First Phase — Somerset.**

(a) **Somerset Protector (1547–52)** — a religious man, and a Reformer, very sympathetic to the poor.

(i) *Religious policy.* Asked Cranmer to draw up the *First Prayer Book* (1549) (which followed Roman service in many respects); abolished images in the churches; destroyed frescoes and pictures; confiscated property of the religious guilds which used to help poor.

(ii) *Economic policy.* Distress due to dissolution of the monasteries, enclosures, and bad coinage. Somerset wished to deal with this, and to help the poorer classes.

(b) **Revolts against Somerset.**

(i) His brother *Seymour* may have plotted to marry Princess Elizabeth and seize power. The Council had him executed.

(ii) Revolt came in the *west*, caused by *religious* objection to the New Prayer Book. Somerset brought over German Protestant soldiers, and rebels (who had restored the mass throughout Devon) defeated, and great severity shown (1549).

(iii) More serious was the revolt in *Norfolk*, *Ket's Rebellion* (1549), which was a protest against the enclosures and the unemployment they brought, and against rise in prices due to issue of bad coinage. Somerset sympathized with them, and tried to come to terms. The King's Council objected, and Warwick (later, Duke of Northumberland) put down rebellion, severely.

(c) **Failure of Scottish Policy.**

Scotland ruled by Catholic Regent, Mary of Guise. Refused to accept marriage treaty of little Queen Mary to Edward VI.

Somerset invaded Scotland; defeated Scots at *Pinkie* (1547) ("The Rough Wooing") but the Scots sent Mary to France and Somerset's violence ruined the plan of alliance.

**2. Second Phase — Northumberland (1551–53).**

Somerset universally discredited, and replaced by *Northumberland*, who was far more violent reformer, and a cruel, ambitious man.

(a) **Religious Policy.**

(i) *Northumberland* issued the *Second Prayer Book* (1552), more extreme and Protestant in character.

(ii) He determined to work for a *Protestant succession*. He married his son Guildford Dudley to *Lady Jane Grey*, the Protestant heiress of Henry VIII's younger sister (and by Henry's will, heir to the throne). Edward VI induced also to make a will settling the Crown on her.

- (iii) On death of Edward VI, tried to capture Mary but failed. Proclaimed Jane Queen (nine days' Queen). Failed, and Mary, after ascending the throne, ordered Northumberland's execution (1553).

(b) **Economic Policy.**

Unlike Somerset, had no sympathy with the poor — or understanding of their grievances.

- (i) Abolished the "chantries" or small charities.
- (ii) Debased the coinage, and thus raised prices and ruined trade.
- (iii) Encouraged enclosures.

*Note (c)* **Economic revolution under the Early Tudors.**

- (i) The discovery of the New World, flooded Europe with gold and silver, which raised prices, while wages rose far more slowly. The English government made this worse by themselves issuing quantities of "debased" coinage, i.e. without true proportion of silver, and hence foreigners would not accept this coin, and trade suffered.
- (ii) Land was enclosed for sheep-farming, and this led to great unemployment at first. Later the prosperous woollen trade helped the town-workers, but agricultural labourers were thrown out of work.
- (iii) This led them to migrate to the towns, where too large a supply of labour led to low wages, and broke down the system of training skilled apprentices.
- (iv) The dissolution of monasteries, gilds, and charities deprived the people of any help, just at the time when they most needed it.

NOTE 47. — MARY TUDOR (1553-1558)

1. **Religious Policy.**

- (a) Mary planned complete return to Rome; mass restored; Edward's legislation repealed; reformers fled the country; former Bishops restored (1554).
- (b) Heresy laws revived. Hooper, Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, tried and burnt (1556).
- (c) Papal Legate sent to Britain, and England reunited to Rome. (But, Church lands not restored to the Church.)

2. **Foreign Policy.**

Mary's foreign policy probably alienated the country as much as her religious policy.

- (a) She refused to marry Courtenay, the heir of the Yorkists.
- (b) She insisted on *marrying Philip of Spain*.  
This led to *Wyatt's rebellion* (1554). As a result Jane Grey executed and Princess Elizabeth imprisoned.

(c) In alliance with Spain, she joined in *war with France*, which resulted in loss of Calais (1558).

**Note:** England had no quarrel with France, and, with the rise of Spain, she became definitely hostile to that power.

In defence of Mary it can be said that "toleration" was not known in those days (Calvin in Geneva persecuted as cruelly as Mary); she hoped all accused of heresy would save themselves by returning to the faith; the number burnt was 300 in 3 years, not many compared with the persecutions abroad. But Philip thought Mary was mistaken in her policy and was driving her people into opposition, and urged her not to persecute at all. Certainly the English nation did not forget or forgive her.

#### NOTE 48. — ELIZABETH'S RELIGIOUS SETTLEMENTS

(a) Elizabeth bound to be a Protestant, because of her birth. As the daughter of Anne Boleyn, could never be recognized as Queen by the Pope and Catholic Church, which never admitted Henry's marriage to Katherine invalid (hence could not recognize Anne's marriage legal).

(b) Wished to take advantage of reaction against Mary's persecution, so "*steered a middle course*".

(i) *Abolished Papal power.*

(ii) Sovereign declared "supreme in all causes" (but *not* head of the Church). *Act of Supremacy* (1558).

(iii) Church to be accepted by all, *Act of Uniformity*, 1558, which decreed use of Second Prayer Book of Edward VI, with omission of all attacks on the Pope.

(c) *No active persecution.*

Catholics who would not attend church to be fined only. Later executions were for treason against the Queen not for religion as such.

#### NOTE 49 — THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

(a) Elizabeth's Church of England had to compete with the *Reformed Papacy*. The abuses of the Papacy were not dealt with by Rome itself.

(i) *Council of Trent* (1542-63) abolished some of the abuses attacked by Luther.

(ii) *The Society of Jesus* (Jesuits) acted as missionaries to purify the Church, and especially to educate the young. Founded 1540 by Loyola, a soldier, to fight for the Church through teaching and preaching.

(iii) The Popes themselves were men of a better standing, with high ideals, who led the movement to purify the Church.

(b) *The Catholic sovereigns* tried to stamp out heresy in their dominions.

Philip II of *Spain*.

- (i) Used the Inquisition to destroy heresy in Spain itself.
- (ii) Was determined to stamp it out in the Netherlands (also his dominions).
- (iii) To fight, if necessary, against the heretic power of England.

In *France* the country was torn by civil wars between Catholics and Huguenots, and the Crown was Catholic, as was the powerful League, headed by the Guises.

**Note:** Elizabeth's foreign policy was one long struggle against the Counter-Reformation, and centres round her opposition to the great Catholic persecuting power, Spain.

#### NOTE 50. — ELIZABETH AND MARY OF SCOTLAND

Scotland had adopted the Reformation, through the preaching of *John Knox*, but the Queen, Mary Stuart, was Catholic.

1. Knox led a rebellion against the Regent, Mary of Guise (1559). The French threatened to intervene, and Scots appealed to Elizabeth. She sent help, and by *Treaty of Leith* (1560) Elizabeth and the Reformers joined against the French, who were driven out.
2. In 1561 *Mary Stuart* returned to Scotland.
  - (a) She wished Elizabeth to recognize her as heir, but Elizabeth would not do so. (She might herself marry, and she did not wish to upset her religious settlement by the prospect of a Catholic Queen inheriting.)
  - (b) Partly to annoy Elizabeth, Mary married *Darnley*, another heir to the English throne (grandson of Margaret Tudor). Marriage a failure. Darnley helped to murder Rizzio (1566) and was himself murdered by Bothwell (1567). Mary then married *Bothwell*.
  - (c) Rebellion of the Scots lords against Mary and Bothwell. Elizabeth refused to countenance them. Mary surrendered at *Carberry Hill*, and imprisoned. She escaped, was defeated at *Langside*, and fled to England.
  - (d) *Mary in England: The period of plots.*
    - (i) After the Commissioners considered the Casket Letters genuine, Elizabeth kept Mary as a sort of prisoner. *Norfolk* plotted to set Mary free and marry her. Failed. Norfolk then plotted with Spain for foreign invasion. *Rebellion of Percies and Nevilles in the North*, defeated (1569).
    - (ii) Pope now *excommunicated Elizabeth* and her subjects told they need not obey her. *Ridolfi* plotted with Spain, failed (1571). *Jesuit mission sent* (1580) to convert England, and *Throckmorton* plotted with Jesuits to kill Elizabeth (1584).

In 1584, William of Orange assassinated, and in 1586 *Babington's Plot* to kill Elizabeth; Mary was proved to be acquainted with this. Mary tried, found guilty of treason, and executed.

**Note:** The earlier plots aimed in theory only at releasing Mary, and to have her recognized as heir; next plots aimed at making her Queen instead of Elizabeth; later plots aimed directly at assassination of Elizabeth. The murder of William of Orange convinced the English nation that Elizabeth's life was not safe while Mary was alive, and while the Catholics could replace Elizabeth by Mary.

#### NOTE 51.—ELIZABETH'S SOCIAL REFORMS

Elizabeth inherited troubled conditions due to the economic revolution of the Tudors. She dealt with unemployment by

1. **Statute of Apprentices** (1563) ordered justices to meet regularly and fix prices and wages. Meant to secure a "minimum wage" and to see that workers were trained in skilled industry.
2. **Establishment of Poor Law** (1601) which decreed as follows:
  - (a) Each parish to raise a *poor rate* for relief of poor.
  - (b) Old people and sick to be cared for in almshouses and hospitals.
  - (c) Children to be apprenticed and taught a trade.
  - (d) Work to be found for unemployed, and if no work available, money to be given to destitute.
  - (e) Those who could work, but would not, to be punished.

**Note:** Elizabeth's system first made the State responsible for seeing its citizens did not starve. It also kept families together in the home.

3. **Justices of the Peace** now made responsible for the relief of the poor, the fixing of wages and prices, and the suppression of petty crimes (including recusancy and non-attendance of Catholics at church).

#### NOTE 52.—THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE

1. **Literature.** The "great age" of the Elizabethan writers.

*Playwrights:* Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster, Kyd, Beaumont and Fletcher.

*Poets:* Spenser, Ben Jonson, Sidney, etc.

*Other writers,* such as Hakluyt (*Collected Voyages*), Chapman (translated Homer), etc.
2. **Art.** New style in architecture, great revival of crafts, such as silversmiths' work, tapestry, etc.
3. **Music.** English composers such as Byrd and Orlando Gibbon. Masques and pageants with music a usual entertainment.

4. **Education.** General high level of education, for both men and women. Queen herself extremely well educated, spoke French, Italian, Latin — fond of music and drawing.

The general culture of Elizabethan age and its many-sidedness makes it one of the most glorious periods of our history. Influenced by the rise of *national* spirit, and pride felt by Englishmen in their country's successes and expansion. Also part of a *general* movement, for in all countries culture, and material wealth, now showed a great advance.

#### NOTE 53. — ELIZABETH'S FOREIGN POLICY

Unlike Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Mary, Elizabeth always opposed Spain — this is keynote of her foreign policy.

##### 1. Elizabeth and France.

- (a) *Elizabeth always used France as a make-weight against Spain.* France, though Catholic, needed help against Spain, and hence willing to make English alliance. Treaty with France at Cateau-Cambrésis (1559).
- (b) Elizabeth negotiated with the Valois Kings, offering marriage alliance, first with Duke of Anjou, then with Alençon, the brother of the King.
- (c) After massacre of St. Bartholomew, Elizabeth still did not break off negotiations (1572).
- (d) After the death of the Valois King, she helped Henry IV (Henry of Navarre) with money (1589). (Sent £300,000 in one year.)
- (e) Part of the effect of her friendship with France was to counteract the connection between France and Scotland. Throughout Mary Stuart's reign France gave Mary no support, but kept on good terms with Elizabeth.

##### 2. Elizabeth and the Netherlands.

The Netherlands were part of the dominions of Philip II of Spain, but became strongly Protestant. Trade route from Spain to Netherlands passed up the Channel and could be commanded by England. Elizabeth supported the Netherlands, but not "officially", after they rebelled against Philip (1568).

- (a) She *gave refuge* to all the Flemings who fled from Alva's persecution. This greatly helped the English textile trade as Flemings were skilled workers.
- (b) She *sent money* to William of Orange to enable him to buy munitions (in ten years she sent him half a million).
- (c) She *seized the ships* carrying Philip's money for Alva's troops (1568).
- (d) After the assassination of William the Silent (1584) she sent an expedition under *Leicester* (1585) to help the Netherlands. Defeated at Zutphen.

**Note:** Elizabeth disliked helping rebels against their king, as she always upheld royal authority and thought a subject should have the religion supported by the sovereign, but she was driven to help the Dutch in order to harass Philip.

### 3. Elizabeth and the Papacy.

The Pope could not recognize Elizabeth as Queen, as he could not admit the legality of the marriage of Henry to Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn.

(a) Hoped for replacement of Elizabeth by Mary Stuart, and hence supported Norfolk's plots and Ridolfi's (1566-71). In 1570 Elizabeth "excommunicated" and subjects released from obedience.

(b) In 1584 Pope started "Enterprise of England" to restore Catholicism.

(i) In Scotland, Esmé Stuart sent to win over young King James to Catholicism; failed.

(ii) Legate sent to stir up trouble in Ireland; failed.

(iii) Jesuit mission sent to convert England; failed.

Execution of Mary Stuart (1587) then left only a Protestant heir, James Stuart; and failure of Armada, 1588, ended hopes of Catholic conquest.

### NOTE 54. — ELIZABETH'S POLICY OF "DELAY" AND "NEGOTIATION"

Elizabeth's policy of hesitation and negotiation is often criticised as difficult to understand. But she had a very weak position with the country divided over religion, enemies abroad, and difficulties in Scotland. She needed time. Therefore:

(a) She compromised as far as she could over *religion*, so as to give England time to settle down.

(b) She kept on good terms with *Mary Stuart*, as long as she could, and when Mary came to England refused to take strong action against her until forced to do so. Would not recognize Mary as her heir for fear of upsetting her own Protestant subjects.

(c) She did not wish to provoke *Spain* to open war till England was stronger, so did not break openly with Philip, but sent help "privately" to France and Netherlands, and did not employ Drake "officially".

(d) She did not wish to commit herself definitely to alliance with *France* (for that would decide Philip against her) so kept on prolonging negotiations.

(e) She had a small kingdom, not much money, no powerful relations or allies, therefore used her *only* weapon, negotiation, and kept powers dangling by pretending she might make a *marriage* alliance. If she had once definitely committed herself, or married, she would have had no bribe to offer to any foreign prince.



## NOTE 55.—THE ARMADA (1588)

1. Philip driven to attack England, because
  - (a) On death of Mary Stuart she by her will made him "heir" to England.
  - (b) Elizabeth was now openly helping the Dutch.
  - (c) The Pope gave his support.
2. Armada was not meant to be a "battle-fleet" but to act as escort to transports, and bring Parma's invading army over from Netherlands.
3. Therefore Armada avoided a "battle" in the Channel, and tried to anchor off Dutch coast.
4. Fire-ships at Calais drove the fleet to sea, and the British off *Gravelines* prevented it reaching Dutch harbour. Then storm drove fleet out to sea and to the north. Hence note the Spanish losses were only nine in the fighting, but over sixty in the storm round Scotland and Ireland.
5. The English were prepared for invasion, and had a large army ready at *Tilbury* which lies opposite Dutch coast where Parma's army was ready to embark.

## NOTE 56.—ELIZABETH AND IRELAND

1. Ireland remained Catholic, when both England and Scotland became Protestant. The "English" were only settled in the Pale, round Dublin. The Irish chieftains were largely independent. This shown by rebellion of *O'Neill*, early in the reign (1567).
2. The Counter-Reformation proved very successful in Ireland, and Jesuit mission very effective. So in 1579 came *Desmond's rebellion*—Spanish and Italians landed but defeated at *Smerwick*. *Munster* devastated and English colonists brought in.
3. *Tyrone's* rebellion (1595–1603) helped by Pope and Spain. *Essex* sent to suppress it (1599). Plotted with Tyrone and made a truce with him. *Mountjoy* sent in 1600, defeated Spaniards at Kinsale, and defeated Tyrone (1603).  
Ireland now crushed, but
  - (a) "Plantations" only established small hostile settlements.
  - (b) Irish remained Catholic and hence permanent division between the nations.

## NOTE 57.—ELIZABETHAN SEAMEN AND TRAVELLERS

## 1. The Sea-raiders.

*Hawkins* started the trade in negro-slaves, and shipped them to Spanish America (1562), *Drake*, *Cavendish*, and *Raleigh* all took part in raids on America.

*Drake* first defeated by the Spaniards at San Juan d'Ulloa (1567), resolved on revenge. In 1572 famous exploit of capturing the mule train laden with silver, at Panama.

In 1577 sailed round into *Pacific* and raided all the Spanish cities along the west coast of South America.

*Raleigh* tried to find the Golden City (El Dorado) of Peru. Voyages failed.

**Note:** (i) *Drake* and *Hawkins* were really raiders, or pirates, attacking Spanish merchant ships, and plundering Spanish towns. The others were trying to discover new routes to the East to open up trade.

(ii) When war with Spain became certain, *Drake* was sent by the Queen, as a fighting man, to attack the Spanish fleet in *Cadiz* (1587) "singeing the King of Spain's beard". The object was to delay the Armada. When the Armada came, the English fleet was commanded by Lord Howard, as High Admiral, and *Drake* was one of the numerous captains under him. He sent the "fire-ships" to burn the Spanish fleet when it anchored off Calais. In 1589, was sent to attack Portugal, but failed.

## 2. The Discoverers.

*Drake* sailed by Straits of Magellan, into the Pacific, and round the world, 1577-80. Knighted for this on ship *Golden Hind*.

*Cavendish* also sailed round the world and discovered use of limes against scurvy.

*Humphrey Gilbert* attempted to colonize *Newfoundland* (1583).

*Raleigh's* ships discovered Florida and *Virginia* where they founded a colony (1576).

*Frobisher* went to Greenland and Labrador, and found *Hudson Bay* (1578).

## 3. The Travellers.

These tried to find route to India by land.

*Jenkinson* (1558) went through Russia to Persia, to open up route to China.

*Newbury and Fitch* went to Persia and on to India and Siam.

## 4. The Trading Companies.

Elizabeth encouraged trade by granting charters to the new trading companies. These sprang up because new trade was carried on with such distant countries. Companies pooled their resources together to meet great expenses.

*Muscovy* Company (1553) traded with Russia; *Eastland* (1579) with the Baltic; *Levant* (1581) with Turkey and Near East; *East India* with East Indies and India (1600).

## NOTE 58. — ELIZABETH AND HER PARLIAMENTS

1. Elizabeth's rule depended on support of the nation, and Parliament really represented the nation's backing of Elizabeth.
2. But as reign went on, Parliament showed where trouble might, and did, come later. Two main causes of dissension, money and religion.
  - (a) Quarrels over *finance*. Prices had risen, but Parliamentary grant of revenue had not risen. Hence Queen always in need of money. Elizabeth's revenue £200,000 a year. Spent large sums on helping Dutch and French and on revolts and Armada and Ireland. Granted *monopolies* to raise money. Parliament objected and Elizabeth abandoned the policy.
  - (b) *Religion*. Rise of the *Puritans*. Elizabeth herself no Puritan, and objected to persecution. Puritans wished to abolish bishops, establish *Presbyterianism* (brought in Bill, 1587), Elizabeth forbade Parliament to discuss the matter, and arrested the leaders.

# TIME CHART FOR PERIOD FIVE (1486-1603)

| Sovereign.                | Events in Britain.   | Dates. | Events Abroad.  | Dates. |
|---------------------------|--|--------|---|--------|
| Henry VII<br>(1485-1509)  | Henry marries Elizabeth of York; Navigation Act.   | 1485   |   |        |
|                           | Lambert Simnel.  | 1487   | Diaz rounds Cape of Good Hope.  | 1487   |
|                           | Purkin Warbeck; Treaty of Etaples.   | 1492   | Columbus discovers America; Spanish conquest of Moors of Grenada.   | 1492   |
|                           | Poyning's Law.   | 1494   | French invade Italy.  | 1494   |
|                           | Magnus Intercursus.  | 1496   | Diet of Worms.  | 1496   |
|                           | Marriage of Prince Arthur to Katherine of Aragon.  | 1501   | Vasco da Gama finds route to India; Inquisition set up in Spain; Columbus deprived of governorship of Indies. | 1498   |
|                           | Princess Margaret marries James IV of Scotland.  | 1502   |   |        |
|                           | Marriage of King Henry with Katherine of Aragon.   | 1509   | Calvin born.  | 1509   |
|                           | Wolsey rises to power; Battle of Flodden; James IV killed.   | 1513   | Holy League.  | 1511   |
|                           | Wolsey becomes Chancellor.   | 1514   | Battle of Spurs.  | 1513   |
|                           | More wrote <i>Utopia</i> .   | 1516   |   |        |
|                           | Alliance of England and Emperor Charles V.   | 1520   | Death of Ferdinand of Aragon.   | 1516   |
|                           | War between England and France.  | 1522   | Luther writes his <i>Theses</i> .   | 1517   |
|                           | Henry invades France.  | 1525   | Death of Emperor Maximilian; Cortez invades Mexico.   | 1519   |
|                           | Question of annulment of Henry's marriage.   | 1527   | Field of Cloth of Gold.   | 1520   |
| Henry VIII<br>(1509-1547) | Reformation Parliament meets.  | 1529   | Revolt of peasants in Germany.  | 1524   |
|                           | Wolsey dies; More made Chancellor.   | 1530   | French defeat at Pavia.   | 1525   |
|                           | Act of Appeals; Marriage of Henry and Anne Boleyn.   | 1533   | Sack of Rome.   | 1527   |
|                           | Act of Supremacy.  | 1534   | Peace of Cambrai between France and Spain.  | 1529   |
|                           | Thomas Cromwell Vice-Chancellor; More executed.  | 1534   | Pizarro invades Peru.   | 1532   |
|                           | Pilgrimage of Grace; Dissolution of monasteries; Anne Boleyn executed; Marriage of Henry and Jane Seymour. | 1536   | Calvin publishes "Institutes"; Loyola founds Order of Jesus.  | 1534   |
|                           | Birth of Elizabeth I.  | 1537   |   |        |
|                           | The Great Bible; The Six Articles; Marriage of Henry and Anne of Cleves.                                   | 1539   |   |        |
|                           | Execution of Cromwell; Henry marries Catherine Howard.   | 1540   | Order of Jesuits confirmed by Pope.   | 1540   |
|                           | James V killed at Solway Moss.   | 1542   | Calvin established at Geneva.   | 1541   |
|                           | War with France.   | 1544   |   |        |
|                           | Murder of Cardinal Beaton.   | 1546   | Death of Luther.  | 1546   |

# TIME CHART FOR PERIOD FIVE (1486-1603) — Continued

| Sovereign.                      | Events in Britain.   | Dates.  | Events Abroad.   | Dates.   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Edward VI</b><br>(1547-1553) | Somerset Protector. Invades Scotland; Battle of Pinkie.<br>First Prayer Book; Act of Uniformity; Ket's rebellion;<br>Revolt in the West; Somerset arrested; Northumberland Protector.  | 1547<br>1548<br>1549<br>1550<br>1552                            | Mary Queen of Scots sent to France; Diet of Augsburg begins; Death of Francis I.   | 1547   |
|                                 | Dissolution of aids.<br>Somerset executed; Second Prayer Book.<br>Execution of Northumberland; Reconciliation with Rome;<br>Spanish match.   | 1549<br>1550<br>1552  |  |  |
|                                 | Wyatt's rebellion; Execution of Lady Jane Grey; Marriage of Philip and Mary; England re-united to Rome.<br>Persecution of Protestants; Philip leaves England.<br>Cummer burnt.   | 1553<br>1554<br>1555<br>1556<br>1557<br>1558                    | Emperor Charles V abdicates.   | 1556   |
|                                 | War with France.<br>Loss of Calais.<br>Anne of Cleves-Cambrésis with France; Knox returns to Scotland; Religious settlement in England; Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy.  | 1559<br>1560<br>1561<br>1562<br>1563<br>1564<br>1565<br>1566    | Marriage of Mary Queen of Scots and Dauphin.<br>Mary Stuart, Queen of France; French army sent to Leith; Jenkinson reaches Moscow.<br>Death of Henry II.<br>Wars of Religion begin in France; Disturbances in Netherlands.<br>Close of Council of Trent. | 1558<br>1559<br>1560<br>1562<br>1563                 |
|                                 | French leave Scotland; Treaty of Edinburgh.<br>Mary Stuart returns to Scotland.<br>Hawkins begins slave trade.<br>Statute of Apprentices.<br>Shakespeare born.<br>Mary marries Darnley.<br>Murder of Rizzio.   | 1567<br>1568<br>1569<br>1570<br>1571<br>1572<br>1573<br>1574    | Drake and Hawkins at San Juan de Ulloa; Alva sent to Netherlands; War begins in Netherlands.   | 1567   |
| <b>Elizabeth</b><br>(1558-1603) | Murder of Darnley; Mary marries Bothwell.<br>Bride of Langside; Mary flees to England.<br>Rising in the North.<br>Ridolf plot.<br>Norfolk executed.<br>Prohibitor sails to North West.<br>Drake sails round the world.<br>Irish rebellion.<br>Campton executed.<br>Gilbert sails to Newfoundland; Throckmorton plot. | 1571<br>1572<br>1573<br>1574<br>1575<br>1576<br>1577-81<br>1579 | Revolt of Moors crushed.<br>Elizabeth excommunicated.<br>Victory of Lepanto over Turks.<br>Massacre of St. Bartholomew; Siege of Haarlem.<br>Sack of Antwerp.<br>Portugal conquered by Spain.  | 1569<br>1570<br>1571<br>1572<br>1573<br>1576<br>1580 |
|                                 | Babington's plot.<br>Mary Queen of Scots executed.<br>Spanish Armada.  | 1581<br>1583<br>1586<br>1587<br>1588                            | William the Silent assassinated.<br>Drake raids West Indies; Leicester sent to Netherlands.<br>Drake at Cadiz.   | 1584<br>1585<br>1587                                 |
|                                 | The <i>Revenge</i> .<br>Tyrone's rebellion.<br>Death of Drake.   | 1591<br>1595<br>1596  | Death of Catherine de Medici; Henry of Navarre King of France.<br>Death of Duke of Parma.  | 1589<br>1592   |
|                                 | East India Co. founded.<br>Poor Law.   | 1600<br>1601  | Death of Philip II; Henry IV issues Edict of Nantes.   | 1598   |

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS ON PERIOD FIVE

(1485-1603)

1. Describe the chief ways in which Henry VII strengthened the monarchy. (LGS 1935)

2. What dangers threatened Henry VII from abroad and how did he seek to defend himself? (NUJB 1936)

3. Describe the relations between England and Scotland from 1485 to 1558. (NUJB 1937)

4. Describe the domestic policy of Henry VII. (NUJB 1938)

5. What were the chief economic problems in England in the sixteenth century and what measures were taken to deal with them? (LGS 1935)

6. What motives had Henry VIII for his break with Rome? (OC 1938)

7. Explain why the reign of Henry VII is regarded as marking a new epoch in the history of England. (UW 1932)

8. Examine the effects in intellectual life in England of: (a) the invention of printing; (b) the work of the "Oxford Reformers". (OL 1932)

9. Show the attitude of each of the following towards the Protestant Reformation: (a) Sir Thomas More; (b) Desiderius Erasmus; (c) Martin Luther; (d) Henry VIII. (CWB 1931)

10. How far had the Reformation proceeded in England by the death of Henry VIII? (LGS 1937)

11. Show: (a) why and (b) how, Henry VIII defied the Papacy. (NUJB 1937)

12. State the part played in the Reformation by: (a) Cranmer, and (b) Somerset. (NUJB 1938)

13. State the main facts concerning Henry VIII's relations with: (a) France, (b) Spain, and (c) Ireland. (NUJB 1938)

14. Criticize the foreign policy of Wolsey. (OC 1938)

15. Give an account of the progress of the Reformation in England from the end of the Reformation Parliament in 1536 to the death of Edward VI in 1553. (LGS 1936)

16. What did the Reformation movement in England owe to: (a) Archbishop Cranmer, and (b) The Protector Somerset? (CL 1932)

17. What effect did the conversion of arable land into pasture have upon the social and economic life of England during this period?

(NUJB 1931)

18. What were the main causes of economic distress in Tudor England? To what extent was it relieved?

(OC 1938)

19. State the main facts concerning: (a) social distress in England in the reign of Edward VI; (b) the policy of Somerset and Northumberland with regard to this problem.

(NUJB 1937)

20. Trace the course of exploration during the Tudor period.

(LGS 1936)

21. State the main facts concerning the growth of English naval and maritime power under the Tudors.

(NUJB 1938)

22. What importance in English history do you attribute *either* to the reign of Edward VI *or* to that of Mary?

(OC 1939)

23. "The accession of Mary Tudor was very popular, but her death was equally welcomed." Discuss this statement.

(OC 1935)

24. Describe: (a) Elizabeth's difficulties during the first ten years of her reign; and (b) How she dealt with them.

(NUJB 1937)

25. For what reasons was Mary Queen of Scots beheaded, and what were the political results of her execution?

(OC 1938)

26. Why was Queen Elizabeth so reluctant to go to war with Spain, and why did she eventually do so?

(OC 1939)

27. Describe Elizabeth's foreign policy down to 1588. Do you consider that it was successful?

(LGS 1936)

28. What were the causes of Elizabeth's war with Spain?

(NUJB 1936)

29. "Elizabeth seldom made a decision; she left things to settle themselves." Discuss these statements.

(OC 1931)

30. Show how the foreign policy of Elizabeth differed from that of her father and grandfather.

(LM 1919)

31. Discuss Elizabeth as a typical monarch of her time. How far was she personally responsible for the fortunes of England in her day?

(LM 1920)

32. Describe the relations which existed between England and Scotland from 1559 to the end of the year 1568. What was the Scottish question especially important during these years?

(OC 1931)

33. Outline the relations of England and France during the reign of Elizabeth.

(LM 1922)

34. Explain the term "Counter-Reformation" and show how England was affected by it during the reign of Elizabeth.

(LM 1921)



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